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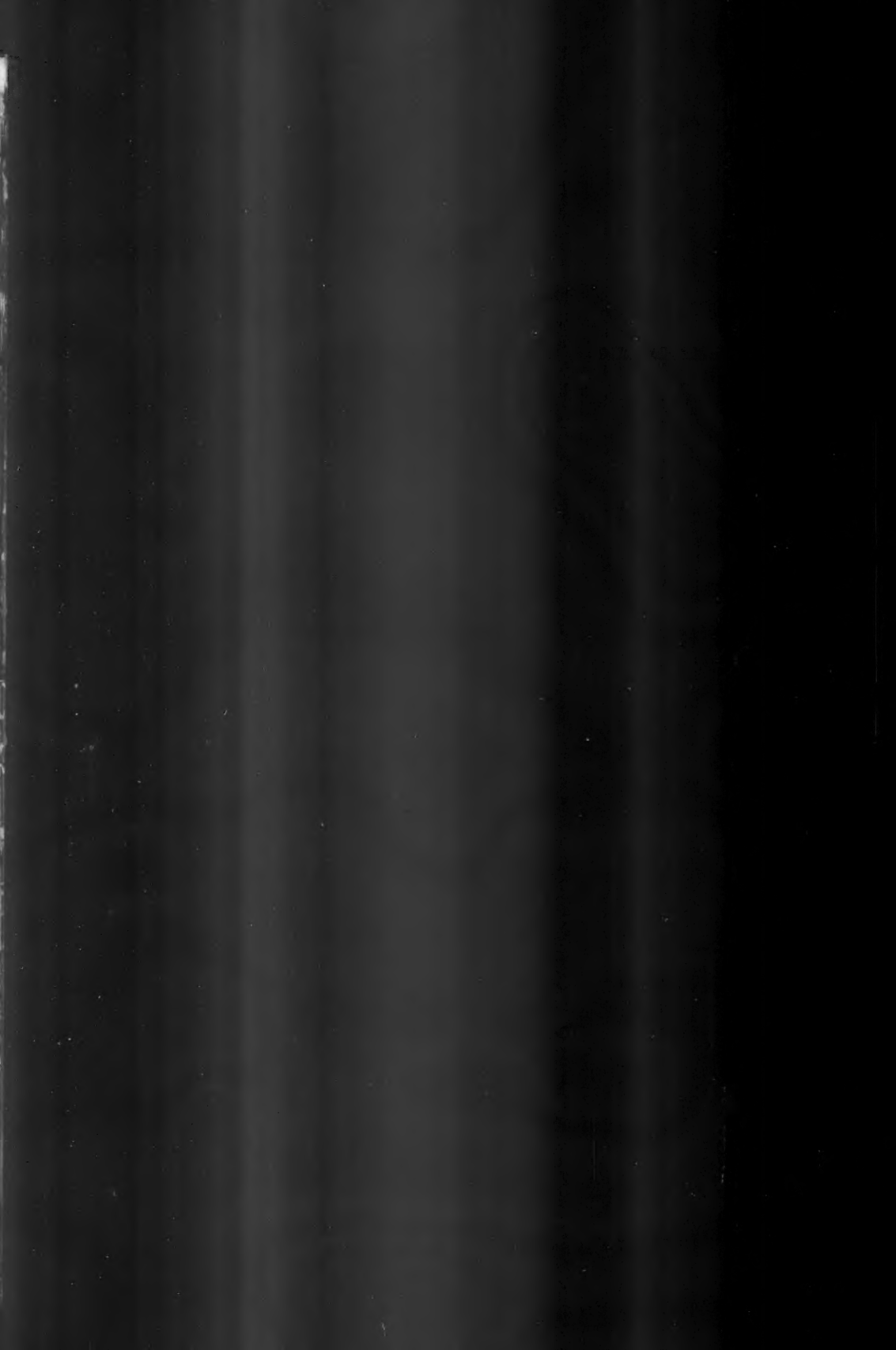
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# THE MUSIC REVIEW

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## Vaughan Williams' Fifth Symphony

BY

A. E. F. DICKINSON

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' war-time Symphony, broadcast at its first performance at the Albert Hall in 1943 and now recorded by His Master's Voice with the co-operation of the British Council, is palpably the work of a free artist, not an underground revelation. The Symphony embodies some themes and one dramatic background from an unfinished opera, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and may so far be regarded as a preliminary outlet for, or deliberate salvage from, an operatic design uncertain of fulfilment, as Borodin's second symphony was a sublimation of sketches for *Prince Igor*. But there is no jarring sense of adapted structure, and the composition may be accepted as essentially both the symphony and the work Vaughan Williams wished to write in the fourth year of the War. Let not this artistic security, or the spontaneous public welcome without any attempt at political censorship, be taken for granted. It could not have been expected in most countries that have in the past led the world in the cultivation of original music. In any Fascist State a "non-political", i.e. non-Fascist, artist is sure to receive no public support, even if he is fortunate enough not to have been long discredited as "decadent", and economically boycotted. Some of the countries occupied by Germany have been denied the right to enjoy their national culture at all. In Russia a composer who toes the somewhat mysterious line of "Soviet realism" can certainly count on a security of livelihood which his British brethren may envy; but a plain symphony in D, providing its national audiences with no reflection or direction of their life, and so far deficient in simple, heroic, optimistic melody as to be suspiciously "formalistic" and subjective, would have to face every official prejudice from the national critics, if it was ever performed at all. We in Britain must not entertain any bias against the establishment of a departmental and fallible ministry of the arts, without which every composer's opportunities of orchestral rehearsal and so on will remain extremely haphazardous and dependent on private support. But let us not overlook the rare qualities of our national tradition, fruit of a historical parliamentary record and still preserved in a menacingly totalitarian and destructive world. These values will be remembered later by those who concern themselves with the liberation of artistic life in countries where it is now dead or in chains. This Symphony, if any, shows the products of individuality, national and personal, and its production and diffusion in these years of universal stress may be counted as a sign at once of singular present opportunity and of wider hopes of reconstruction. It is unworldly and certainly not cosmopolitan music, its serenity is the product not of complacency but of conviction.

It must be admitted that musically the British symphonic tradition is vague and elusive, apart from the maintenance of artistic as opposed to

political standards. On the Continent in the last century a solid background of French, Italian, German, Russian or Czech opera, of German wind-bands and Italian or Czech string virtuosity, illuminated many salient features of Beethoven and the rest. It became a matter of taste whether the usual four movements of Haydn's scheme were to be independent entities, in sonata form and the like, or cumulative deliverances with at least one recurrent clue-theme. The local drive towards vivid and at the same time extended music remained. In Britain there has been no such habitual approach to developed music. The nearest thing has been the romantic cantatas from which the first British symphonies of more than historical importance, Elgar's, derived a certain opulent glow, along with a confident apotheosis of the motto-theme in the first symphony and, in a twilight setting, in the second. Similarly, the idealist strain of British choral music as represented by Bach, Brahms and Parry meant that the symphonic works performed in the same festival or season tended to be received in a religious spirit rather than as entertainment. Consequently Vaughan Williams has been able to appeal to audiences whose wide Bach experience enables them to appreciate inwardness and probing and six-part counterpoint, not only in the *Sea Symphony*, but in its successors. Nor must the real adventurousness and persistent performance of Wood's pioneer modernist work for a growing orchestral public be forgotten. However this may be in detail, the pursuit of musical moods for their own sake, whether they conform to symphonic convention or not, has been a salient impression of Vaughan Williams' symphonies, whose titles have never indicated more than a general trend of musical thought and possibly odd bits of local colouring. In each symphony the treatment has had a constant touch of the unexpected, and from one it would be impossible to guess the style of the next.

Thus the symphonic tradition of Vaughan Williams himself has been at once increasingly complex and increasingly downright. Inevitably the purely orchestral content of the *London Symphony* distinguished it in type from the vocal initiative and poetical basis of the *Sea Symphony*; and it was to be expected that London would invoke a humorous incongruity on the surface in a composer with a mystical turn who had at the same time declared his belief in the creative exercise of broad human sympathies. But to name no other point, the flux of sonority produced by parallel motion in octaves and fifths, sometimes in the defiant atonality of the whole-tone scale, now becomes an essential feature, not incidental colour for illustrative purposes. The ties with the older harmony are considerably loosened, and in its place starts a process of revolution round successive centres of pitch, some of which are fixed enough to be key-centres in some sense.

In the *Pastoral Symphony* (1922) this kind of flow is taken for granted and at once forms an undercurrent against which main themes enter and leave at pleasure, with harmonic results to match. This undercurrent is rhythmically variable, and in consequence it is easy to steer in a fresh direction, possibly (to keep to our analogy) by way of a harmonic eddy or weir that replaces the old "lock" system of formally changed levels. But there is an impression of drift, except in the third movement. The melodic line frequently moves after

the manner of plainsong, with recurrent melismata that fear no "false relation" of A natural to a chord containing A flat. Sometimes these press against the prevailing metre; sometimes they definitely halt it in an extensive timeless cadenza, such as marks more than one principal theme. The false-relation principle is also extended to the antagonism of parallel harmonic sequences. It may be added that the *cor anglais*, whose characteristic solo-appearance in the middle movement of Franck's Symphony has been censured as *a priori* "unsymphonic", is prominent in the *Pastoral*, and equally many other distracting solo-effects of string, wind and even wordless voice. This rhythmic plasticity, orchestral diffusion and harmonic vagueness are balanced by the strength and formal dignity of certain themes and orchestral climaxes, and by the undeviating swing of the Scherzo. To maintain this balance, which in any event constitutes a wayward type of symphonic sequence, is a tricky problem for a conductor, especially one with a strong sense of social relations with his audience. In every technical aspect the Symphony stretches the musical freedom of the lonely visionary (formerly "on the beach, at night, alone") to an extreme point. It needs a special concert-hall, or at least an audience that expects no conventional symphonic stir. (The Symphony never sounded better in my experience than in Gloucester Cathedral; it may sound well, to its select listener, from a broadcasting studio, where I once conducted it, but this antiseptic atmosphere, of listeners totally uninfected by each other's attentiveness, could never be regarded as an ideal.) In its own style, however, the *Pastoral* constituted a notable extension of symphonic thought, and its scope evidently impressed the composer, with enough reservations to demand considerable adjustments in any future plan of verifying the experiment.

Evidence of this was not forthcoming for twenty years. It was several years before a new symphony appeared at all, and then it was anything but pastoral in the town-poet sense. Not only had the composer made Job's experience of Blitz his own, but he could see an actual world minatory and intractable. Now, if any, was the time to out-Walton the fierce young men of musical Europe in an epitome of the storm and stress that assailed all men of goodwill and intelligence. Whatever the preliminaries, the year 1935 produced No. 4 in F minor, conspicuous for its fiery and positive rhythms, restlessly appealing slow movement, uncompromising harmonic dissonance and cumulative demoniac frenzy; technically notable for the relentless and at times savage evolution of a crotchety, almost carpet-biting chromatic leit-motif, C-B-Db-C; lyrically notable for the spurts of melody and the moments of calm. The *London* Symphony had forecast this outburst in certain respects, but its friendly, dissolving discords and vulgar melodies could not be compared with the inexorable strain of the four movements of the F minor.

To follow Vaughan Williams on his symphonic journeys, then, has always been a constant mental stretch, not without severe jolts to one's musical equilibrium. There is no short cut, no recurrent formula or typical experience, by which one symphony points to another. If any clue is to be named, it lies in an absorption of the bluntness, racy metres and gnarled melodic contours

of certain English folk-songs. (Contours, not exact phrases, the quotation of which has been quite incidental and has been pitifully underlined by certain critics after the manner of A. W. Verity. For details of this process of cleaning the paint from the continental stage off one's face, the reader may be referred to two articles in the *Monthly Musical Record*, September and October, 1939.) Nevertheless, the course of each symphony is clear and memorable. I refer this to signal concentrations of personality on each occasion, reinforced by certain characteristic choices of melodic and harmonic type (from a two-bar phrase to a paragraph), in changing contexts and emphases. Taken together, the four symphonies mark an arbitrary-angled but coherent span of expression. Only by letting their contrasts of matter and content sink into the mind, to rise to renewed and spontaneous consciousness, can one measure the true and integral relation of the several moods and technical features that constitute the art of Vaughan Williams up to date. Hence some recollection of their styles may be considered necessary to a judicious appreciation of the content and workmanship of a renewal of that art in Symphony No. 5 in D. The appeal of new music depends partly on being tuned up for it.

A reference to the *Pastoral* and F minor symphonies is particularly urgent. The new Symphony turns its back upon its predecessor in several notable respects. First, it palpably replaces the taut, Sibelius-like conciseness of the F minor by a more spacious treatment, yet with considerably more rhythmic concentration than the *Pastoral*. The first movement, called *Preludio*, at once breathes a pensive note. It grows mainly from the opening theme and is of scarcely moderate speed (80 beats to the minute), qualified by an *allegro* interlude. The next movement is therefore a *presto* Scherzo of a brisk Rondo variety: the monotony of the opening two movements of the *Pastoral* is discreetly avoided. The third movement, the one that originated in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and here called *Romanza*, is a more or less normal *Lento* in a single mood, meditative enough to melt into metrical melismata without weakening its rhythmic progress, and eloquent after the kaleidoscopic and mercurial *Presto*. The finale, called *Passacaglia*, balances the prelude by the steady expansion of variations on or from the opening ground-bass, ending quietly to the strain of a counter-melody which has been prominent throughout. An evocative allusion to the *Prelude* tapers into this final stage. Otherwise each movement is independent.

The second reversal of the F minor lies in the abandonment of a chromatic basis in favour of almost entirely diatonic melodic lines, major, minor or modal, so that the few chromatic motives appear as something of an incursion from a more disturbed world. I say advisedly, melodic *lines*: the salient phrases are less themes than types of melody, for example, the ascent of a fourth and back (prelude) or of two fourths and back (Scherzo and, incidentally, the *Romanza*). A connection is thus felt between the first three movements, but it is one of melodic tribe, not of melodic personality. There is a tendency in the first two movements to return to the vocal period of music, when phrases were contrapuntally apt intonations of words, not themes for their own sake. The listener will have some difficulty in distinguishing one primitive phrase

from another, or from contributory *arpeggio* figures based on chords of the seventh. A tendency of the harmony to become fixed on  $\frac{6}{4}$  or  $\frac{\sharp 4}{2}$  or  $\frac{b7}{5}$  chords, irrespective of themes, adds to the effect of generality. In the Romanza the positiveness of a recurring chromatic harmonic sequence points the shape of the main melody and keeps the incidental coloratura in proportion. In the Passacaglia the melodic facts are so definite from the start as to adumbrate a conscious conclusive clarity of point and counterpoint in perpetual progress, healthily avoiding "modern" wryness.

We may now try to sort out the various movements.\* The orchestra used is on the light side. It is virtually that of the *Unfinished Symphony*: wind in twos apart from the usual three trombones. The second oboe plays *cor anglais* throughout and the second flute plays piccolo when required. There is no harp or tuba or "Turkish" percussion. In the Preludio a homely discord, which the experienced listener (remembering the "natural" sevenths of the trumpet theme in the *Lento* of the *Pastoral*) will not wait to hear resolved, colours the first intonation of the "Tone" from which most of the movement



springs. The tonality is obscure, but we will take it to be D, with F sharp or F natural, but always C natural. An arpeggio phrase, presenting a *descending* fourth in an equally unresolved  $\frac{7}{5}$  or  $\frac{4}{3}$  chord (*i.e.* the common chord *plus* seventh), proves a useful complement to any note in suspense, or to any note of a chord that bears emphasis. A change of key-centre to F and then C



(Dorian mode) introduces an expansion of 1. A gesture of expectancy (2,



*plus* the tail of 1 in the bass) prepares the listener for the positive revelation for which 1 is designed. An unequivocal major sets its seal on this tense paragraph, beginning as follows and later transfigured by modulations to G major and beyond at the point marked with an asterisk. The entry of the trumpets and drum adds a touch of the transcendent. It should be mentioned

\* I have to thank the Oxford University Press for the loan of a copy of the score.

that the pervasive and universal *Rheingold* rhythm of the first bar has already permeated the general contrapuntal texture, mainly in the wind. Here, too,



the feeling is of immanent will at work in the universe. When it has subsided, a turn into C (Aeolian)—echoing the sudden minor of "Behold the sea itself" near the end of the first movement of the *Sea Symphony*—crystallizes into an *Allegro* whose *motif* derives from 2. Like 2, this can implement any common



chord, in root position or second inversion, to which the music may gravitate, and accordingly does so with some frequency. A further theme, amenable to close contrapuntal "imitation", supplies chromatic grit to the generality of 3.



It appeared once before, disturbing Erda's sleep in the *Moderato*. The remaining phrases derive from 3, I should guess.



A cumulative phase of close imitation based on 3*b*, urged forward by the rhythmic swirl of 3 in the bass (strings in unison) demands a positive reply, which takes the form of a concise restatement of the *Moderato* opening. Phrase 1 having been already expanded in 1*a* and 1*b*, the recollection of 1 and 1*a* is reduced to less than half its original measure, and 2, being a mainly cadential phrase, barely appears and is reserved for the coda. Thus the crucial return

to 1*b* comes earlier than expected. It is also approached, not with quiet deliberation, but by a sudden plunge into its second bar as the unmistakable climax of a quick *crescendo* based on 1*a*, in B flat, changing to G major, at which point the drum significantly re-enters, reserved for this episode. But by way of coda 4 and 3*a*, backed by 2, add their tart flavours to the solemn music, now in the prevailing *moderato*. An alternation of 2 in F and the horn opening of 1 (ultimately muted horns) completes the Prelude in an unresolved style now familiar to the composer's audiences. The general impression of the movement is of elemental figures coming to life, as in the *Prometheus Variations*, with a quixotic tilt at the minor midway, as occurs in the final *Eroica* version of the same work. Any resort to the old overture plan of formally contrasted subjects would be alien to the material, which may be regarded as the intonations of the ideal Common Man, not the sophisticated tunes of an idle public. This is no work for the Albert Hall. It would sound well in a cathedral, from whose oldest routine music it has essentially sprung.

The chief elements of the Scherzo (vaguely reminiscent of a clue-line in the F minor Symphony) are at once exposed. The last (5*b*) makes harmony for a forbidding sequent theme (6), variable in detail, in A (Aeolian) and D

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*ppp*

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*p cantabile*

(Dorian). Wind and string appearances of 6 are divided by the close fugal treatment of 5*a* in the wood-wind. An episode follows. Its material has something of the inconsequence of the *London* Symphony. First, a queer strain on the oboes in C minor, recalling (*a*) the antinomy of 4, (*b*) the restless arpeggios of 3. The latter soon prove a constant accompaniment and occasional foreground. Next appears a catchy, youthful phrase in F sharp (Phrygian mode), which recurs later, augmented to three times its original length, in the Aeolian mode in C sharp and E. Meanwhile the arpeggio figure has

Fl. Picc. Cor Ang.

Clar. Vla. Cello

carried the music through G and B flat (Aeolian), with solemn trombone allusions to 5 that hint at a return without making it explicit. After this

skirmishing the steady three-bar phrases of a thoughtful new tune, rhythmically suggested by 7 in augmentation, are impressive. It recalls 1b in melodic

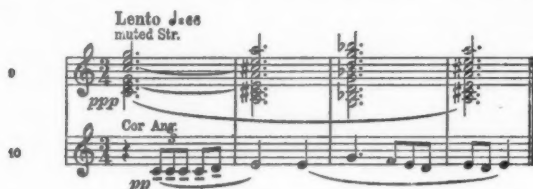


contour. In now inevitable repartee 5a returns, again in fugue, but this time in *staccato* tones, with 6 in its footsteps. Formalities soon satisfied—neither theme is of an expansive nature—a second episode, grotesquely chromatic, protests against the scholastic logic of 5. It covers the keys of C, E flat, A and C again, in the minor, but with stimulating qualifications. Finally, 5 insinuates itself more and more, and 5a burns itself out in the bassoon and flute under or over chords of the seventh. A last flicker of close imitation up and down the strings leaves a final spark of A (plucked double-bass) for key-note.

The exhaustive treatment of the main "theme" recalls that in the Scherzo of the *London*. But there the recurrent and melodically pointed phrase (with one fourth) is propelled by various harmonic eddies whose contrary stress adds freshness. Here the basic phrase is in itself melodically arbitrary and lacking in spontaneous direction, if vocal prompting is any guide, and it is cold comfort to which to come home from strange adventure. Further, its fugal development tends to suffer fixation on one chord, and that a  $\frac{7}{4}$  or  $\frac{7}{5}$ , devoid of stimulant or stability. Nor is the companion theme less Spartan nourishment. Moreover, in the *London* Symphony the perky bobbing up and down of the main phrase, though monotonous and, in my judgment, rather tedious, makes fitting humour after the absorption of the second movement. Here the obsession with severe melodic lines in the Aeolian mode, on top of the melodic and dramatic restraint of the Prelude, seems provocative to the most sympathetic listener. Nor can the episodes be described as abandoned escapes from austerity. However, the composer's meaning in this Scherzo is clear enough, and one must try to understand why he finds it suggestive. It remains, in the shortest space of time, the most varied movement of the four, and there is no use in deploring the somewhat Starkadder atmosphere. The proportions are right: no theme is over-stated, and this *Presto*, about 6 minutes long to the 15-9-11 of the other three movements, ends as exactly on time as a Bach fugue.

A quotation from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is attached to the Romanza, and refers to an inscription on a sepulchre by a cross, "He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death". But the movement needs no such dramatic justification (except the opening triplet monotone in 10, below?). The opening chordal sequence (in A), presented in a rare texture of muted strings in ten-part harmony, soon proves a truly haunting refrain—its four- or four-and-two-bar period carries more meaning than the not dissimilar two-bar motif in the slow movement of the *Sea Symphony*—and it forms the harmonization of the main theme, in which the expressiveness of conjunct

motion is striking to an analytical listener. (The *tempo* marked is too fast: 50 crotchets to the minute is nearer justice.) A complementary phrase,



recalling 5 for the moment, grows into this satisfying line in a slightly faster



*tempo*. The remainder of the movement arises from these. First, a *coloratura* offshoot of 11 is developed imitatively by the woodwind—in the prevailing metre, not *ad libitum* as in the *Pastoral Symphony*—briefly but waywardly enough to warrant a restatement of 9, 10 and 11 in E, returning to A. A more formal development-note is sounded by the delivery of 9 in an animated  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$  rhythm on unmuted strings, and by the augmentation of the third bar of 10 to a jaunty sequence of descending root-position chords, via an almost hectic oboe delivery of the same bar. This impulsive gesture of real and earnest life is amplified by the full brass in reply to 10 on the horn. The animation slackens, as may be expected, in a return to *coloratura* in the original *tempo*, but now tensely and involving contrasted groups of strings and wind (the restatement of the melismatic opening theme in the finale of the *Pastoral Symphony* is the prototype of this group-utterance). This *coloratura* treatment continues to the end, steadied by solemn wind recurrences of 9 in C, A and (most striking) F sharp, a full resumption of 11 with a resonant climax, and finally by the “resolution” of 9, now adumbrated in second-inversion position on re-muted strings, by a mystical version of the latter part of 10 on muted horn, instrumentally echoing the Prelude, but concluding in a satisfying A major cadence in the strings. More than in the *London Symphony*, the harmonic refrain of this slow movement grows in significance as it is repeated, and renewed hearing confirms the rightness of the melodic lines and decorative details. Compared, however, with the rich content of the earlier *Lento*, this movement appears remarkably single-minded, the middle *Animato* being momentary.

Singleness of mood also characterizes the final Passacaglia. The key is definitely D major from the start—key, amongst other things, of the emergence of Job's strongest self. Bass theme and evocative counter-melody (with inner harmony) at once appear, the latter a song of the Common Man, but

soon made to prove its resilience! It has to measure its length and strength with the bass at more than one starting-point, by somewhat autocratic harmonic methods, as will be observed. On these shapely blocks of melody the whole structure is built. The following quotation, in which 13 and 13a are successive counterpoints to the bass, shows how the 7-bar measure of the bass can be altered to 6 or 8 by making the 7th bar start a new period in inverse scansion, the odd bars becoming the even. The position in 13a is more elastic, but I take it to be a 5-7 sequence. The counter-melody has on this assumption to conform with three scansions, first as parallel, then as intersecting rhythm. The former is less rhetorically effective, being rhythmically too much in unison with the theme to counter it distinctly, and by the same token the parallel movement in 13 of the consecutive octaves with the bass in the 1st and 9th bars, and consecutive sevenths in the 5th and 6th bars, surely weakens the contrapuntal flow for the sake of a smooth melodic line at

the top. Triumphant inversion and ingenious rhythmic variation, with the theme compressed to 6 bars in most cases, carry this at first quiet formal process to a vigorous climax, and the pace quickens. In this *Allegro* 13 (the first 6 or 7 bars) takes charge, with a new figure suggested by 12 in counter-

point above in its 2nd and 6th bar, and 13 itself in the 3rd and 5th. In piquant contrast the wind take up 12 in a snappy rhythm in F (Lydian mode) against *pizzicato* harmony in jaunty but decisive parallel motion up the tones of the scale. A return to 13 in D brings a glorious sense of achievement, with



of *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*. The simplicity of the basic motives lends conviction, as in the end of the composer's *Christmas Ballet*. Personally, I find this

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reverent dénouement a little easy-going, for all its academic finesse, after the highly "respectable" adventurousness of the middle section, and also after the assurance of the Romanza's conclusion. A problem which a conductor may be able to solve.

In any interpretation this is a simple finale, without real precedent, for it has neither the naiveté of Haydn's releases, nor the cumulative force of Brahms' Passacaglia finale to No. 4, nor the epilogue-after-struggle of the *London* Symphony, nor the insistent exultation of Sibelius No. 5; still less the urbane sonata-form-plus-clue-themes of the comparably quiet Elgar No. 2. It is tempting to speculate that here Vaughan Williams turned with almost Soviet realism from the grim stress of the unforgettable F minor to a vision of the enlightened common round that must one day urge its claims upon those who have gone through the F minor to make that round credible. Here, at any rate, is something positive, secure and fundamentally so plain that it may be categorical. If this categorical note is caught, the movement will make as imperative a conclusion as the main transition to D major in the Ninth Symphony, to which intimate exposition the present finale surely pays tribute. Once again, intense personal concentration has revealed a universal quality of appeal. The D major is not a world-embracing symphony in the Mahler or even in the F minor style, nor an intensely national product in the tradition of Borodin and Sibelius and in intention Shostakovich, but its firm handling of essentials, quiet orchestral dignity and generally sterling quality will commend it to any unprejudiced listener in the Western world.

## Some Trials of a Music Librarian

BY

DONALD R. WAKELING

WHEN Fritz Kreisler in 1935 revealed the facts of his amazing and lengthy leg-pulling of the musical world I am sure there was nobody who did not envy him the hearty silent laughter he must have enjoyed over a long period; nobody, too, begrudged Paul Klenovsky his flying visit to (or for that matter, regretted his equally hurried departure from) the realms of Apollo. This otherwise sombre generation of ours (and it has been through enough to make it sombre) likes nothing better than a good joke, and if the joke is on us we like it none the less for that. Probably the greatest victims of these practical jokers are the music librarians whose carefully prepared catalogues are not printed without an infinite amount of verification and patient research in order to ensure that each item included shall appear under its authentic composer and title. How much time and trouble, I wonder, has been spent by these worthies searching through the works of Couperin, Francoeur, Martini and others for mythological works, or through innumerable biographical dictionaries for elusive Russian composers. Is it realized how many entries have had to be cancelled and reprinted, how many cross-references have had to be added, and what this means in the way of money and lost man-hours, to say nothing of grey hairs and loss of sleep? That, however, is a cheap price to pay for anything intended to brighten this dull world, even if the number of people enjoying the fun is limited to the perpetrators of these pranks.

These practical jokers are but some of the thorns in the side of the music librarian. There is the obscurantist who collects and arranges forgotten and often unknown works of the Masters, many of which delight and intrigue us. The intriguing, however, is usually caused by the arranger forgetting, intentionally or unintentionally, to give us any indication of the source of his arrangement. I wonder why. Is it done to create an aura of mystery around the works or to infuse some additional interest? Maybe it is some new and fashionable form of puzzle game. On the other hand, is it done intentionally to exasperate the musicologists into compiling complete thematic catalogues of all composers so that they can with ease and speed solve these puzzles? If this last be the reason then by all means give the obscurantist every encouragement, in fact spur him on to greater efforts; apart from rescuing a few gems from oblivion, if his curious method of persuasion succeeds with the musicologists, he will have performed a great service to music and music librarians.

Whatever may be the modern intention of this habit, the habit itself is not new. The great Masters themselves were guilty, as is shown by the classic example of the *Sehnsuchtswalzer*—*Trauerwalzer*—or whatever your personal choice prefers to call this haunting melody. It is evident, too, that publishers or editors had a hand in these deceptions, for it is hard to believe that Schubert

claimed the Guitar Quartet in G as an original composition. Why should he wish to steal the thunder of the poor Bohemian guitar player Matiegka?

To call a crow a nightingale does not make it sing more sweetly. To call a Voluntary a March makes little difference; whether the trumpet was Purcell's or Clarke's the familiar clarion call will sound the same wherever or whenever it is performed, and the score will remain unaltered. Not so in our music catalogues. Here are the mighty fallen; the famous Purcell must retire and give pride of place to his less famous contemporary, involving in the process the usual cancellations and cross-references. Is this, I wonder, some compensation to poor Jeremiah Clarke for the loss of his lady love which led with such disastrous results to his death by a screw pistol? If so, we will look upon the extra work he has given us as a reverent obligation and not as a disagreeable duty.

It is more usual, and more understandable, to find works by greater artists ascribed to lesser artists—usually by the lesser artists themselves—than the works of lesser artists ascribed to greater, and exceptions to this order are looked upon with suspicion. When, therefore, some years ago the late Sir Arthur Somervell arranged two songs from Calphurnia (*No, oh Dio* and *Un ombra di pace*), attributed them to Handel and died without telling us why, we were a little diffident about cataloguing them under Bononcini. Handel, we know, was an inveterate borrower, but from his rival—Never! Despite the fact that

"Some say compared to Bononcini  
That Mynheer Handel's but a ninny."

Nevertheless, since the two songs were published under the name of Handel they presented yet another test of the cataloguer's ingenuity.

It does not come within the sphere of duties of a music cataloguer to criticize or condemn composers for plagiarism, but it is a valuable asset if he or she is able to identify at a glance a great number of musical compositions—the greater the better. This asset, however, becomes a little disconcerting and riling at times when one recognizes, shall we say, a Romance of Schumann's and has to catalogue it under the name of some almost unknown plagiarist.

I might add that in order to satisfy the demands of the many casual enquirers who come along with "Do you happen to possess a copy of this?"—then proceed to make strange sounds accompanied by the words "Tum-te-tum-tum", which they assure you are the first bars of the work they seek, it is an additional advantage to be able to recognize by sound as well as by sight not only a large number, but also a wide variety of works ranging from "Sumer is icumen in" to "Lily Marlene", from the most primitive melody to Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony.

In the appalling cases of jazzed classics I feel that cataloguers are perfectly justified, nay, in duty bound to omit all reference to the already injured Master, and make the jazzist solely responsible for the unholy cacophony usually resulting from such sacrilege. Fear of the Law of libel forbids me to particularize or expand my observations on the subjects of plagiarism and jazzed classics, and since they do not affect cataloguing, unless the composition

to be treated is stolen *in toto*, we will leave these unsavoury topics to their own devotees.

How valuable an asset to the music cataloguer is the ability to recognize at sight the greatest possible number of musical compositions, may be judged when it is realized how vast is the amount of arranged music that passes through his hands christened with titles never dreamed of by the original composers. Vocal music arranged for instruments and instrumental music arranged for voices, the arrangers of which, like our old friends the other obscurantists, seldom give a clue to the original source. Let me give a few examples, but, be it remembered, there are hundreds of others not so familiar, and even the best music librarian can hardly be expected to recognize every work of even the great Masters, still less all the movements of a work, and it would be considered a miracle if he recognized all the music that has been arranged and re-arranged. The lack of adequate reliable and complete thematic catalogues—the surest and quickest medium for tracing the source—is only too well known.

*Golden light: Agnus Dei, pour contralto ou baryton, violon solo ou violoncelle, piano ou harpe, harmonium ou orgue*, as a title very effectively camouflages Bizet's *Arlésienne Suite*, 2, *Intermezzo*.

From the title *Sleep, my little dove. Christmas carol for mixed voices with soprano solo (or junior choir). From an old Alsatian carol*, Gluck himself would never have recognized the chorus *Non sdegnare, o bella Venere* and aria *Come consuma l'avidia fiamma* from his opera—*Paride ed Elena*.

Chopin's 12 *Grandes Etudes*, Op. 10, No. 3, has received considerable attention and appears under various titles: *Tristesse—So deep is the night—Reviens mon amour*, etc.

Liszt's *Liebesträume. Notturmo* 3, too, has many aliases: *Vesper bells—Woodland dreaming—O, kindly light*, etc., etc.

But Handel's *Ombra mai fù* from *Xerxes* must surely head the list with almost every title under the sun except *Pop goes the weasel*.

"... Newly discovered MSS. never before published," especially when alleged to be by one of the great Masters, are bound to cause some sensation in the musical world and some new entries in the music catalogues. Music librarians, in consequence of their bitter experiences, are suspicious creatures and do not accept such statements as gospel truth. The vast store of material for reference and verification, usually to be found in the larger libraries, will sometimes prove the statement, so proudly displayed on the title-page, somewhat exaggerated, and, if his luck still holds good, the librarian might also recognize a MS., say, in the handwriting of Beethoven or Mozart, to be a composition by Kozeluch, thus blowing sky-high a long-standing attribution by some very learned musicologists—not by his superior knowledge or deeper research, but simply because he happened to know and recognize at sight Kozeluch's composition. But I am beginning to spoil an interesting story which, it is hoped, will be published by an eminent scholar in the near future, and it is best told in his own words.\*

Another ingenious trap which our cataloguer must be prepared to meet if he wishes to bring all the compositions of a man together is the queer method

\* See "Kozeluch Ritrovato" by O. E. Deutsch in *Music and Letters*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, January, 1945. (Ed.)

used by some composers of adopting as many different names as there were colours in Joseph's coat. Alfred W. Rawlings, for example, who died in 1917, according to A. E. Wier, is known to have published works under the following names:—Charles Arthur Rawlings, Theodore Bonheur, Denis Dupré, Florence Fare, Frederic Mullen and Gustav Krenkel, and for all we know he may have used a dozen others besides. Frequently one finds a composer who has used two or three pseudonyms; even Johannes Brahms, in his youth, wrote some pot-boilers under the name G. W. Marks.

It will be observed that all these little things sent to try us were perpetrated in fairly recent times, but for sheer diabolical awkwardness, obscurantism and deception the snares laid by the earlier music publishers in general, and by John Walsh in particular, make these trials seem mere child's play. It is not intended here to enlarge upon their methods, but if the reader is interested to learn more of the serious pitfalls that beset the music librarian together with some suggestions for avoiding and overcoming these difficulties (and I have only playfully touched upon the fringes of the subject) he would do well to glance through a very enlightening paper read before the Bibliographical Society on 15th March, 1943, by Professor O. E. Deutsch printed in *The Library N.S.*, XXIII, No. 4.

### Reviews of Music

Benjamin Britten. *Serenade for Tenor Solo, Horn and Strings*, Op. 31. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 7s. 6d.

This is the vocal score (including horn part) by Erwin Stein of a very odd work. Between a prologue and epilogue (off stage) for horn the singer delivers settings of six well-known English poems linked by the common association of evening and darkness, twilight passing into midnight. The effect, without Berlioz' violent contrasts or the concluding "Tempest" Fantasia, is comparable to *Lélio*, and the treatment of "O Rose thou art sick" does show a certain emotional kinship to the "Choeur d'Ombres" in that work. But nothing will ever make these poems mix, and the juxtaposition of the Blake and the "Lykewake Dirge" (the dying and the dead day) suggests a heaviness that one does not look for in a serenade, coming after Cotton and "The splendour falls" (from *The Princess*). More serious exception can be taken to a *Presto e leggiero* treatment of Ben Jonson's "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair". To recite this poem fast is to ruin it; besides, it is the static aspect of the moon ("Seated in thy silver chair") with which it deals, and to answer that the address is sung by a hurried ephemeral does not meet the difficulty. Mr. Britten makes amends by an extremely sympathetic rendering of Keats' sonnet to "Sleep", and any lover of poetry who is still in doubt whether Keats wrote, or meant, "lords" or "hoards" before "Its strength for darkness", will be confirmed in preferring the former on musicianly authority. The conclusion is charming.

William Busch. *Two Songs* (Blake). (Chester.) 2s. 6d.

*The Centaurs* (James Stephens). (Chester.) 2s.

The Stephens is a colourful quasi-recitative song in which a triplet rhythm is maintained; its conventional D minor close is effective. In the first of the Blake's the "merry notes" of Memory are hardly suggested, and the mood is rather that of faint reverie, expressive and hardly melodic, in a key signature of four sharps, closing in the accompaniment with a held B sharp against A sharp (octaves). The "Laughing Song" is also atmospheric, all over in a minute, with pauses not quite where you would expect them. Both have an arabesque character.

E. H. W. M.

## Contingencies

BY

CECIL GRAY

PART III

[Continued from Vol. V., p. 249]

It need hardly be said, I hasten to add, that one does not expect a kind of apocalyptic millennium of art—that the entire population of our cities and countryside are about to fill our concert-halls to overflowing in order to listen to the masterpieces of Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. The public for good art has always been a minority, and always will be. All we wish to suggest is that the minority will be a larger one than it was before.

To some, no doubt, even this will appear excessively optimistic. Mr. George Orwell, for example, in his brilliant little pamphlet *The Lion and the Unicorn*, says that

"the place to look for the germs of the future England is in the light industry areas and along the arterial roads. In Slough, Dagenham, Barnet, Letchworth, Hayes—and, indeed, on the outskirts of great towns—the old pattern is gradually changing into something new. It is rather a restless, cultureless life, centring round tinned food, *Picture Post*, the radio, and the internal combustion engine. It is a civilization in which children grow up with an intimate knowledge of magnetos and in complete ignorance of the Bible. To that civilization belong the people who are most at home and most definitely of the modern world, the technicians and the highly paid skilled workers, the airmen and their mechanics, the radio experts, film producers, popular journalists and industrial chemists".

One cannot help suspecting Mr. Orwell here of a certain streak of masochism, for he is an intelligent man and a highly gifted writer; at any rate he can certainly be acquitted of the charge of wishful thinking, for it is not a world that anyone possessed of artistic sensibility can contemplate without a shudder. If the post-war world were, indeed, to be such as Mr. Orwell has depicted in the foregoing quotation, then, of course, there would be no hope, no future, for art whatsoever—there is no place for it in such a world. But Mr. Orwell, we are convinced, is wrong. The world he depicts with such devastating and depressing accuracy is a picture of the world as it was before the war, or, more accurately perhaps, as it would have become in due course if the war had not happened. In which case, however much we may deplore the war as human beings, as artists we can only welcome it as a blessing in disguise (very well disguised, admittedly), if it saves us from such a melancholy future as this suburban, Wellsian, brave new world—a fate worse than death. Mr. Orwell, in fact, seems to think that the post-war world will be like the pre-war world, only more so; we believe in a complete change, a transvaluation of values.

Already this belief would seem to be justified, and Mr. Orwell confuted—so far as music is concerned, though I believe that the worlds of literature and

art tell the same story—namely, that after the period of complete stagnation which lasted from the beginning of the war to the end of the *blitz*, a wave of interest in, and enthusiasm for, the arts has been initiated and has reached a height and a pitch unprecedented in this country during the years of peace. What is particularly significant and remarkable in this spectacular artistic renaissance—for it is nothing less—is the difference between the new public and the pre-war public. The average age of the typical Queen's Hall or Wigmore Hall audience in former days would probably have been 40-50; to-day it is nearer 18-30—and I am assured, by those who are in a position to know, that this impression is borne out by actual statistics made by professional observers. It is precisely the younger generation that has become art- and music-conscious—and the majority of those who constitute this new audience are the very people of whom Mr. Orwell speaks—"the technicians and the highly paid skilled workers", etc. A short time ago I was fortunate in being able to be present at symphony concerts given by ENSA at Portsmouth and Southampton to war-workers and naval ratings. The choice of programme was uncompromisingly what it is customary to describe as "highbrow", but the house was packed on both occasions, and the enthusiasm tremendous, beyond anything one could have expected in one's most optimistic dreams. Nothing like it would have been possible in pre-war days. It is not, I think, going too far to say that in such phenomena—for the particular experience cited is by no means an isolated or exceptional instance, but one which is reproduced daily throughout the country—we are entitled to perceive the beginnings of a veritable artistic revival in England. And, acutely disturbing though the conclusion may be in certain respects, one is reluctantly compelled to admit that it has to be attributed solely to the war. Without the war, indeed, it could never have come about. It is of the utmost importance that it should not be allowed to come to an end with the war, but that it should be maintained, fostered and further developed in the years of peace which lie ahead. Otherwise it will have been in vain.

The only disquieting feature in this re-birth of the spirit of music in this country—the greatest since the Elizabethan age—consists in the fact that it is largely confined to "the classics". In many ways this is a good thing, but the fact remains that if a genuine, healthy musical revival is to materialize, the creative artist must play his part no less than the public. It is not enough for the latter to become more sensitive and responsive; the former must be more forthcoming and accessible. The ever-widening schism between artist and public, the catastrophic "splits" between the two interdependent limbs which has for so long been one of the leading characteristics of modern art, must be brought to an end, for it spells the death of art. The culminating point of this tendency is to be found in the *Finnegan's Wake* of James Joyce, which, apart from a few isolated passages here and there, remains completely unintelligible to every one except the writer himself, who is now dead. In music we similarly find the *reductio ad absurdum* in the later work of Schönberg, which is similarly written for himself alone, apart from a steadily diminishing band of docile and credulous disciples.

In order to avoid misunderstanding on this point it will be as well to say here that we have no intention of suggesting that one kind of art is intrinsically better than another; that the form of art which appeals to millions is necessarily better than that which appeals to thousands, or that which appeals to thousands better than that which appeals to hundreds, and so on. A certain eminent music critic, Mr. Ernest Newman, once put forward the theory that no work of art which does not appeal to "the plain man" of its time is of any enduring value. We believe, on the contrary, that many admirable works of art appeal only to a few, and will continue to appeal only to a few, and are none the worse for that. There is no greater writer in the English language than Walter Savage Landor, but his audience is, always has been, and always will be, small. The heroes, the martyrs, and the saints of art, with their few devoted disciples, are as necessary and desirable as those with wider appeal and greater audiences. All we wish to suggest here is that what is necessary at this particular historical juncture is something different. The artist must for the time being, at least, descend from his god-like eminence in the clouds and take on mortality and walk among his fellow-men once more, even if it entails a certain loss of divinity. Contact must be re-established between the artist and the public, for we believe in the possibility of the redemption of man through art, and that life without art is not worth living.

In recent times the chief aim of the artist has been to achieve a recognizably individual utterance, to cultivate his personality. To-day, he should aim rather at cultivating his impersonality; those aspects of life and experience which he shares with others, rather than those which are his own unique possession, the things which unite rather than those which separate, the things which bind together—which is the original meaning of the word "religion".

It would even be a good thing if art were to become anonymous again, as it has been in other days. In the Middle Ages, for example, no one cared greatly to know who had painted the picture, written the music, designed the cathedral. The people, interested in art, were, rightly, not interested in the artist's personality. It was the work in itself, the *Ding an sich*, that mattered, and whether they liked it or not. Architecture in particular has always tended to be an anonymous art, and its decline coincides with the emergence of definite names and personalities. The names of very few of the architects of the great mediaeval churches are known, and no one pays much attention to them when they are.

"The custom of signing pictures originated with the growing importance of individuality in style. The primitives, whose art was communal, never signed their works. The 20th century, on the other hand, has witnessed the apotheosis of the signature, when the picture may be little more than a scrawl around the magic name." (*Sickert*, by Robert Emmons.)

In recent times the personality of the artist has become more important than his work. He is expected to do this or that, because he is he. Every artist, however great he may be, is bound to be adversely influenced by this shadow he drags about with him, cast by the sunshine of his fame and reputation. He is compelled to parade a consistent personality, and does not dare

to be his spontaneous self lest it should seem to contradict his self of yesterday. Always to be expected to be oneself means that one has to be consistent, and no artist should ever be consistent.

Anonymity, on the other hand, gives freedom. The artist need fear no responsibility towards his *alter ego*, but can freely obey the impulse of the mood or the moment. He drops the mask, the *persona*,\* and becomes his real spontaneous self. Anonymity, in fact, paradoxically enough, leads to an enlargement, an enhancement of individuality, whereas personality, in the ordinary accepted sense of the word, almost invariably tends to become a prison, a chain and fetters. Royalty, whenever it wishes to be free to do what it wants and to enjoy itself, travels *incognito*, so also should the royalty of the spirit.

Gabriele d'Annunzio, prince of lovers, used to say that his proudest conquest was that of a girl whom he picked up in the streets of Milan. When he mentioned his name, expecting her to be overcome, she had never heard of him. At first annoyed, he quickly realized that it was really a compliment; she had loved him for himself and not for his reputation of a famous man, like all his other conquests. Similarly, the proudest moment in an artist's life is, or should be, when someone says "What a lovely picture", or "what a beautiful piece of music", without looking for the signature on the picture or the name of the composer in the programme.

The fame which attaches to the personality rather than to the work of the artist is a false and meretricious thing, and many of those who achieve it spend most of their lives running away from it and seeking to escape it. Worst of all, he cannot live the life of a normal man, and without normal human contacts he cannot be an artist. The famous man who does not run away from it—Bernard Shaw is a good example—ceases to be either himself or an artist, and becomes merely a public bore, a pulpit orator. The artist should not be a public figure; it is not good for him, or for his art. He should live in the background, and seek to merge himself in the anonymous masses of his fellow men, or to live in solitude. Nothing more infallibly saps an artist's integrity than this kind of false fame which comes chiefly from newspaper publicity and social *réclame*. Few who experience it remain unscathed.

The plain truth of the matter is that the modern artist has got a bit above himself. He exalts himself at the expense of his art. He seems to think that he does it all himself, and that the world should be grateful to him and should bow down before him and worship him. Actually it is he who should be grateful for being allowed to become the humble and imperfect instrument of a divine purpose. It is no more he personally that performs the miracle of artistic creation than it is the village priest who causes trans-substantiation in the ritual of the Mass. It is his function, not his person, which is worthy of reverence and admiration. Artists, like priests, considered simply as human beings, generally stand on a much lower level of decency than is to be found in any other walk of life. The company one meets in a four-ale bar in a

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\* The Latin word *persona*, it is interesting and significant to note, means a player's mask.

publichouse in Wapping is preferable any day to that which one encounters when a concourse of artists is gathered together. There is even much to be said for the view that artistic talent, or genius, is as much a disease of the human psyche as the pearl is of the oyster. The product is beyond price, but it would do many artists good if they could be induced to regard themselves as little better than diseased oysters.

Let us conclude these observations with a highly relevant quotation from an essay by Henry Miller entitled "The Eye of Paris", in the volume *Max and the White Phagocytes*:—

"We have reached the point where we do not want to know any longer whose work it is, whose seal is affixed, whose stamp is upon it; what we want, and what at last we are about to get, are individual masterpieces which triumph in such a way as to completely subordinate the accidental artists who are responsible for them."

This, I firmly believe, will be the art of the future, of the immediate future—a form of art which will express and appeal to that which is fundamental and common to all, instead of, as in recent years, that expresses a particular isolated personality and appeals only to a few. In a word, the artist must become again what he originally was, and what he was always intended to be: the servant of the public, and not its capricious and irresponsible master, and a person of low social status as in former times rather than the spoilt darling of the gossip column and the society salon of to-day. So little do we know of the private life and personality of the two greatest poets of all time, of the antique and modern worlds respectively, that modern criticism seeks to prove that neither of them existed, but that both are pure myths. No better example of the essential anonymity of the greatest art could be found than the life and work of Homer and Shakespeare. In music, Bach is a similar instance of impersonality.

It might perhaps be thought from what has been said above that Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik* was the ideal towards which composers should strive in the immediate future. Far from it. Whatever Hindemith's conceptions may be in theory, his practice is very different from what we have in mind. Hindemith writes music to order, ostensibly to satisfy a popular demand, but he does not satisfy it. There is no composer more disliked—rightly or wrongly—by the ordinary concert goer, than Hindemith. What we want to see is precisely the opposite: the composer who writes what he wants to write and what will at the same time appeal to the ordinary concert-goer. By the "ordinary concert-goer" we do not postulate an imaginary, disembodied ideal, but the audience which congregates at Promenade Concerts, or at Sadler's Wells in the days before the war. It is for such audiences and others like them, that we must primarily work in the years to come. In a word, the artist in the immediate future must come down to earth once more, as it were, and re-establish the vital contact with ordinary men and women which has been largely lost by his predecessors. The alternative is that of a few rare spirits functioning in a kind of vacuum, creating solely for themselves, or *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*—a very fine ideal, one to be respected, admired, revered, but not what is imperatively demanded at the present moment.

What is it that this by no means ideal or abstract audience asks from music? First and foremost, as we have already said, enjoyment. As chief instrument of this enjoyment it demands melody; and by melody we do not mean merely fine melodic writing but what is vulgarly called tune. On the other hand it generally hates like poison recondite harmony without, however, being at all hidebound in this respect. Indeed, it is quite surprising what it can be induced to swallow by some composers, of whom Berg is a good example. But the reason for this is, that with all its surface obscurity of harmonic idiom, especially when studied on paper, with Berg the result in performance sounds very much like late Wagner, particularly certain pages in *Parsifal*. It is probably the chief flaw in Berg as an artist, in fact, that he so often seems to employ a new technique and vocabulary in order to achieve what can be achieved, and has already been achieved, by simpler and more orthodox means. The greatest art is rather that which seems to express something entirely new by means of a traditional technique; and this, I venture to suggest, is more likely to be the art of the immediate future than is that of Berg, or anything similar.

But Berg is an exception in his comparative popularity with the ordinary listener. Bartók, Schönberg, Webern, he cannot tolerate, nor probably will he ever be able to tolerate. He is, of course, wrong in this. As we have already said, we do not agree with Mr. Newman in regarding the plain man as the infallible arbiter in matters of art. There is much that is good and great that will probably always be above his head, and none the worse for that. But it is not what we want at the present time.

What has been said above is also applicable to rhythm. Writers on music talk very glibly and plausibly about "the tyranny of the bar line" and the monotony of the four-, eight- and sixteen-bar phrases of the classical masters, but the plain hard fact remains that at least nine-tenths of the greatest music, and ten-tenths of all that has achieved popularity, has been almost entirely built up in such symmetrical periods.

As necessary and fundamental conditions for the creation of a popular art, then, we postulate the restoration not merely of melody but even of tunefulness to a position of primary importance; the retrogression of harmonic experimentation into the background, and the predominance of comparatively simple and orthodox rhythmical structures. A certain strategical retreat, in fact, is indicated on the part of the composer, as compared with the art of the immediate past.

The essence of the matter is contained in a passage from the recently published *Letters to Dorothy Wellesley* by the late W. B. Yeats, the greatest poet of our time:—

"This difficult work which is being written everywhere has the substance of philosophy and is a delight to the poet with his professional pattern; but it is not your road or mine, and ours is the main road, the road of naturalness and swiftness, and we have thirty centuries on our side. We alone can think like a wise man, yet express ourselves like the common people. These new men are the goldsmiths working with a glass screwed into one eye, whereas we stride ahead of the crowd, its swordsmen, its jugglers, looking to right and left."

In these fine words a whole aesthetic is enshrined; the aesthetic of the art of the near future no less than that of the remote past. It is not, admittedly, the aesthetic of yesterday, but what is more dead than yesterday? It will be said, no doubt, that such a reversion to the ideals of the past amounts to an attempt to put the clock back, as the saying is, and that such an attempt is foredoomed to failure. We shall only reply in the words of G. K. Chesterton who, when his opponent in an argument said "You can't put the clock back", replied, "My dear Sir, you can. Watch me", and going up to the mantelpiece he moved the hands of the clock back with his pudgy forefinger. And this is not merely being funny; it is profoundly true. Time is just what we choose to make it, a purely artificial concept. We put the clock forwards and backwards twice a year nowadays, as a matter of course: and it is equally easy in other spheres—easier in fact. People who say that one cannot put the clock back are merely obsessed with the outmoded, evolutionary conception of everything progressing in a straight line, inevitably, inexorably. Things never do, and history is full of instances in which the clock has been put back. And the best of all possible reasons for putting it back is when it has obviously been going too fast. There are also occasions when it is good to put it forward, when it has been going too slow, but just at the moment it must be put back.

In actual fact it might be truer to say that, owing to a defect in the mechanism, the hands of the clock have been travelling backwards instead of forwards for some time, and that the adjustment it is now proposed to make is, in reality, a setting of them in motion in the right direction once more. At the outset of this essay it was observed that after 1914-18 everything seemed to resume as if nothing particular had happened, and in a sense this is true enough; *i.e.* things started off again where they had left off, but they also started running backwards, and have continued to do so ever since. It is no mere coincidence that during the inter-war years all the catchwords and slogans of successive art movements centred in a "back to" something or other. They have all been retrogressive, not merely in intention, but in fact. Most of what has in recent years passed for being the last word in modernity and contemporaneity has been purely reactionary. We have experienced the odd sensation of travelling backwards in time, as if mounted on the time machine of H. G. Wells' imagining, through a landscape we have already seen. The roaring 20's are really surprisingly like the naughty 90's, when you look at them closely, and the most seemingly modern of all modern movements, the one left ultimately in possession of the field—surrealism—is quite demonstrably, and even avowedly, a reversion to the early romantic world of Horace Walpole, Maturin, and Monk Lewis in England; de Nerval, Petrus Borel (*le Lycanthrope*) and the young Théophile Gautier in France; of Hoffmann, Brentano and Chamisso in Germany; expressed in a style of painting which would have reflected great credit on the Royal Academy of a century ago.

It is as if, with 1914, culture and civilization and art had recoiled, like a wave from a breakwater. We have retrogressed about a century in the last twenty-five years. The dizzy rate of movement that we observe in the last quarter of a century has been uniformly backwards; and in reversing the hands

of the clock from the direction in which they have been travelling, we are in reality setting them in forward motion once more.

To return: the audience which is to constitute the nucleus of the post-war audience for which we must primarily work, is that represented by these two institutions—the Promenade Concerts and Sadler's Wells—under normal peace-time conditions. It is a significant fact, incidentally, and no mere coincidence, that both of them have been gradually built up on that basis of *gusto*, or popular appreciation, which, earlier in this essay, we have seen to be the foundation of all sound and healthy aesthetic experience. Both began in the most humble and unpretentious way: the Promenade Concerts with programmes of operatic *potpourris* and sentimental ballads; the "Old Vic" with *Maritana*, *The Bohemian Girl*, and so forth. They would never have achieved what they have achieved without these humble origins. The growths of art, like those of nature, require manure in order to flourish. The loveliest lily is that which springs from the richest dung-heap.

The Promenade Concerts are essentially a national institution, like the National Gallery, performing the same function for music that the latter performs for the art of painting. It should equally be a permanent institution, functioning all the year round. This is not as impracticable as it might seem at first sight. If it is possible to fill a hall in August and September, when, in normal times, most people are away on holiday, it should be all the more possible to fill it at other times of the year. It would only be necessary to extend the season gradually, year by year, starting a little earlier and finishing a little later until the annual circle is completed. A decided and resolute step in this direction has been taken this year (1944), when the Promenade Concerts have started operations in June, playing to as large houses as when they started a month or two later. The Albert Hall should become the permanent, perennial home of the Promenade Concerts. In the first place, it is the proper psychological locality for a national museum; and in the second place, it is unsuitable for any other concerts, and ideal for the rough and ready, unpolished, but adequate performances which are all that are conceivable under such conditions as those which necessarily prevail in such an institution as the Promenade Concerts, in view of the manifest impossibility of giving adequate rehearsals, from an epicurean point of view, to daily performances such as these.

For this reason, so far from agreeing with those who are wont to complain that too few contemporary novelties are performed in the programmes, I am rather of the opinion that there are too many, that there should not be any at all. Firstly, it is unfair to a new work and its composer to present it without a degree of rehearsal which is unobtainable under the conditions which prevail; and it is equally unfair to the audience. The Promenade Concerts, in fact, should constitute a permanent repository of classical masterpieces, like the National Gallery, and nothing else: with Sadler's Wells performing the same function with regard to the musico-dramatic side of the repertory. Modern novelties should be omitted, for they are not wanted. With all the admirable and desirable qualities of *gusto* and enthusiasm which characterize the audiences of these two institutions, it has to be admitted and accepted that their taste is

in the main unadventurous and conservative. (The Sadler's Wells ballet audience is, of course, an entirely different one from the operatic, clamouring for novelties to the same degree as the latter fights shy of them.)

The fact remains that without new works, fresh blood, there can be no healthy musical life. We need, therefore, another institution, a musical equivalent to the Tate Gallery, which will concern itself exclusively with the presentation of new and contemporary work, on the lines of the Contemporary Music Concerts given by the B.B.C. in the years before the war. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that some such institution is an absolute necessity, for ultimately there is no hope for music in a community which enjoys no contemporary creative life of its own, but subsists entirely or overwhelmingly in the past, as in this country.

To this it will no doubt be objected that there is already a vast amount of vital creative activity in our midst, and that British composers to-day are at least equal, if not positively superior, to those of any other country at the present time. It would give us great pleasure to be able to subscribe to this opinion, but we regret to say that we cannot. The fact that English music is in a very much healthier condition to-day than it was half a century ago does not necessarily mean that we are now on top of the musical world, as so many people fondly imagine and loudly proclaim. Actually the number of composers here who can be considered up to European standards could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

It is necessary to say this quite frankly, because in this, as in so many other things, there is a danger in our national vice of complacency. We have praised and encouraged the native composer so much and for so long that he has begun to lose his sense of proportion and to develop a swollen head. One observes precisely the same phenomenon in dealing with dwarfs, cripples and hunchbacks. Everyone is so kind and helpful, so tactful and sympathetic, that they almost invariably end up by becoming fantastically arrogant and conceited—and so it has been with the British composer. We have told him for so long that he is as good as anyone else, in order to encourage him, that he now honestly believes he is better than anyone else. The time has come for a slight corrective.

This is not to say that one is pessimistic or cynical as regards the future of music in this country. On the contrary, the prospects were never so bright. If it is true that, as already suggested earlier in these pages, too great material prosperity and affluence is the enemy, not the friend of art, both in the individual and in the community, both in creator and public—well, that is a state of affairs which is being rapidly remedied, it will surely be agreed. If the cult of the English Gentleman and the old-school-tie is the greatest enemy to artistic achievement in this country—well, that is going too, if, indeed, it has not already gone. If smug, complacent self-satisfaction and arrogance is the besetting sin of our island race, and the chief obstacle to its artistic development—well, it has had some nasty shocks lately, and it looks like getting some more in the near future.\* In *Predicaments*, written some years

\* This was written before the advent of the flying bomb.

before the war, I ventured to suggest that a military or naval defeat or two might administer a salutary jolt to the national soul. Well, we certainly have had them. There is even a distinct possibility that we shall have a dangerously enlarged soul by the time we are finished, even when we ultimately win the war.

It has been suggested above that the two most vital and deep-rooted institutions in pre-war English musical life are the Promenade Concerts and the Vic-Wells Opera, and it is to be hoped that they will continue to flourish in the post-war world. They represent the nucleus of our musical future, always provided, of course, that their functioning is confided to the right hands. But over all activities there looms the portentous, menacing, Brocken apparition of the British Broadcasting Corporation, on whose knees rests the major part of the present fortunes of music in this country—a proportion, moreover, which is more likely to increase than diminish in the immediate future. Any attempt to determine this future must therefore take into consideration the nature and extent of the activities of this vast and potent organization.

On the credit side let it be said straightway that the musical world owes a deep debt of gratitude to the B.B.C. for many things it has accomplished in the course of its existence. In the first place it has created what is undoubtedly the finest orchestra in the country, and, secondly, it has always gone out of its way to present works which otherwise, on account of their prohibitive demands, artistic and financial, would in all probability never have been heard—such works, for example, as the *Gurrelieder*, *Erwartung*, and the *Variations* of Schönberg, the *Doktor Faust* of Busoni, Berg's *Wozzeck* and *Violin Concerto*, Milhaud's *Christopher Columbus*, Honegger's *King David*, van Dieren's *Chinese Symphony*, Constant Lambert's *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, the *Te Deum*, *Requiem*, and *Symphonie Funèbre et Trionfale* of Berlioz—to mention only a few titles at random—all chosen and presented without prejudice for or against any school or tendency. It may be said, of course, that such activities are part of its duty, and that it can well afford them. That is perfectly true, in the same way that it is true that Sir Hugh Lane, Mr. Samuel Courtauld, M. Eumorfopoulos and other art-patrons could well afford to build up their magnificent collections of works of art. The fact remains that not all wealthy men show a similar taste, discernment and generosity, and no other official institution in this country has ever done so much for the cause of music as the B.B.C., in the face of the most violent hostility on the part of the overwhelming majority of its Philistine subscribers. All honour where honour is due.

The fact remains that, unfortunately, there is a formidable debit side to the account. On all sides, in every section of the musical community, whether composers, critics, singers, players, or the general listening public, there is a steadily mounting *crescendo* of dissatisfaction and irritation directed against the B.B.C. What is perhaps even more significant and remarkable is the fact that these adverse sentiments are wholeheartedly shared and endorsed by all the best minds—and there are many of them—within the organization itself. In G. K. Chesterton's satirical fantasy *The Man who was Thursday*, it will be

remembered, a detective succeeded by a subterfuge in being elected a member of the inner circle of an international anarchist society, only to discover gradually that all his colleagues and associates were also policemen in disguise; similarly the adverse critic of the B.B.C. who comes into personal contact with the executive of the organization finds, to his astonishment, that not only do they agree with his criticisms for the most part, but they even go further in their denunciations. If you want to hear a really searing and withering indictment of the B.B.C. you do not have to go beyond its own portals. And in the strictures which follow it should be clearly understood that they are not directed against any individuals, but the institution, the machine, of which these individuals are themselves, as often as not, the first and chief victims.

The machine—that is the operative word, which explains what is wrong with the organization. From top to bottom all engaged in it seem to be in the grip of an impersonal machine, of which they are the constituent parts, the cogs and wheels, but over which they exercise no control; and the average mentality which the machine exhibits is lower than that of any of the individuals comprising it. The operative power and direction can never be confronted, fought and overcome, because it is not vested in any definite tangible individual or group of individuals. To try to track it down to its lair is as desperate and hopeless an undertaking as the "Hunting of the Snark", of Lewis Carroll. When you think you have cornered it and located it at last, it has melted into nothingness, "swiftly and silently vanished away". The Snark, in fact, is a Boojum.

The B.B.C. is a machine, a bureaucratic machine. In certain aspects of its multifarious activities it no doubt has to be—in its vast news-service, and so forth. But the application of bureaucratic methods and Whitehall mentality to art is the cause of all the trouble, so far as music is concerned; and here we come back to the very point from which this essay started—the fatal confusion between art and politics in the modern world. At the head of affairs of state we find everywhere disgruntled and unsuccessful artists; in control of artistic activities we find everywhere inefficient and incompetent civil servants. The only rational and, in the long run, efficient form of political government is democratic, yet everywhere we find dictators or would-be dictators—they are all the same in every country. The only efficient form of government in matters artistic is dictatorial, yet everywhere we find art under the control of committees and civil servants, and the B.B.C. is the most flagrant example of this deplorable tendency. All its musical activities, admirable as they are in many ways, are vitiated by this Whitehall mentality. The B.B.C. Charter, I understand, comes up for reconsideration in a short time. It is to be hoped that some steps can be taken to dissociate the necessarily bureaucratic control of certain of its activities from that which quite unnecessarily and perniciously operates in the field of art and what can broadly be defined as "entertainment"—otherwise the outlook, so far as music is concerned, in the B.B.C. is a gloomy one. What the musical department of the B.B.C. needs, above all things, is a single, dominating, dictatorial personality who knows what he wants, what the public wants, or should be given (which is not

necessarily the same thing), and who knows how to get it—a musician, in fact, who is given *carte blanche*, and not merely a civil servant “yes-man”.

The B.B.C., moreover, being essentially, as at present constituted, a bureaucracy is, like all bureaucracies, inevitably a hot-bed and breeding-ground of all the freemasonries enumerated earlier in this essay. The number of log-rollers, wire-pullers, back-scratchers and backstair-climbers who have managed to infiltrate into the organization by means of one or other of the forms of influence already enumerated, is truly impressive in its proportions. And of all forms of freemasonry in a bureaucracy, more potent and subtle than that of the freemasons themselves, of the Scots, the Jews, the public school and university gentry, stronger even than that of the homosexuals, stronger even than a combination of them all, is the invincible freemasonry of mediocrity—the trade union of the “leetle people” of whom Frederick Delius used to speak, in his inimitable accent. Indeed, even such a chimerical, though perfectly possible, figure as a Scottish Jew who has been to Eton and Oxford and has homosexual leanings—even with all these qualifications and recommendations, he will find it difficult to obtain a footing inside the B.B.C. if he has any talent. However much the “leetle people” may hate each other individually—and their capacity for hatred is the only big thing about them—whatever may be their personal rivalries and vendettas—and they are on a scale and a degree of internecine intensity without parallel save in Italy at the time of the Borgias—they spontaneously forget their personal differences, close their ranks, present a united front, and fight as one man against the potential advent into their midst of a rival of talent. That there are, and have been, many intelligent and highly competent personalities on the staff has been admitted, but they are almost inevitably thwarted by the overwhelming, omnipresent, dead-weight of self-seeking mediocrity. Unless, or until, a complete change of policy is carried through, this state of affairs is bound to continue, and the enormous potentialities in the cause of music which lie in the hands of this vast organization are doomed to failure and frustration. At the present moment it must reluctantly be admitted that the dead-hand of civil service bureaucratic control and organized mediocrity tends to increase rather than to decrease, but we are not without hopes for the future.

The most encouraging and inspiring feature of recent war-time musical activities has been the increasing tendency towards decentralization. It is, indeed, remarkable to contrast the state of unhealthy stagnation which prevailed in the musical life of the provinces prior to the war, with the vigorous impulse which now animates it. Before, all vitality, such as it was, centred round London, as in a heart which was too weak to pump the life-giving blood into the extremities; the provinces were for the most part cold and apathetic, suffering from progressive anaemia. To-day they are pulsing with warmth and vitality. Indeed, the most encouraging feature of the present musical renaissance in England is precisely the evident determination on the part of the great provincial centres such as Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle, Glasgow and others too numerous to mention, to possess a musical life of their own instead of relying more or less exclusively on that emanating

from the capital. There could be no fairer omen for the future. When every large city in the kingdom has its own regular orchestra, choir, and everything else that goes with them, then, indeed, England may become again what she was in Elizabethan days, the most musical of European nations.

This process of revitalization and decentralization necessarily involves certain sacrifices. The general level of performance of the local organization, technically considered, is bound to compare unfavourably in many respects with that of a "star" orchestra from London which wanders about the provinces, repeating the same programme of familiar classics wherever it goes—a degenerate survival of the old pre-war cult of the visiting foreign orchestra under a famous conductor with his own personal reading of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and so forth. Such performances, no doubt, had a technical finish, brilliance and subtlety to which no provincial, or even national, organization could aspire, but such activities are ultimately sterile, a form of Byzantinism, spelling the death of creative musical art. The perfect performance of the familiar classic, attended by an audience chiefly composed of the aristocracy and the plutocracy, as at Salzburg and Glyndebourne—nothing could be more destructive of music as a living art, reminding one of the homage paid by the courtiers of Don Pedro of Portugal to the lovely embalmed corpse of Inez de Castro.

And here, once more, and for the last time, our argument links up with a subject introduced and developed earlier in these pages—the *leit-motif*, indeed, of the whole essay. The days of such *de luxe* performances, as of the *de luxe* products in the creative sphere, are at an end. They belong to a past order, and will not recur again in our time. The future order will, beyond doubt, be of a ruder, rougher, but more vital order: music as an art, not for a small, select, exclusive clique of snobbish dilettantes, with exquisite and refined palates, but for the more crude and coarse, if you will, but more healthy and robust appetites of the masses. Communism, in fact, whether we like it or not, whether it becomes a political world-reality or not, has come to stay, for some time at least, in the world of art—there can be no doubt about it, and we had best make up our minds to accept the inevitable. But whether we like it or not, one thing is certain and undeniable, namely, that to-day we are witnessing a re-birth on a vast scale of an interest in and an enthusiasm for music on the part of the masses without parallel in modern times, in this country at least, and that this spectacular re-birth is due simply and solely to the war, as already observed above. The philosophic implications of this unquestionable fact are too deep and fundamental to be resolved within the modest limits of this essay. It is enough to say, in the words of de Quincey, in his prose poem *Savannah-La-Mar*, "Less than these fierce ploughshares would not have stirred the stubborn soil".

## *Rhythmic Freedom in Jazz?*

A STUDY OF JAZZ RHYTHMS

BY

MÁTYÁS SEIBER

WHEN after the last war the first waves of Jazz swept over Europe from the New World, musicians trained in the classical tradition reacted to it in two different ways: one group (mostly those of the older generation) violently denouncing this new kind of music as mere noise, barbarous cacophony, etc.; the younger generation, on the other hand, swung to the other extreme and hailed it as the advent of a new musical culture which would be able to inject fresh blood into the veins of our tired old musical civilization. They saw almost unlimited possibilities opening up for the future of music after its rejuvenation by this new blood. As usually happens at the sudden emergence of a new quality, the shock it causes obscures the balanced judgment of those witnessing the process; it takes considerable time to get over the trauma of that catastrophic event and to arrive at a sober assessment of its values and possibilities. Now after more than two decades I think we have arrived at a vantage point from which we can survey the whole field with an impartial view. In the meantime much valuable research work has been done, although mostly dealing with the historic derivations and evolution of Jazz, with a sprinkling of enquiry into its social significance, the colour question, etc. Unfortunately, there is hardly another field of music on which such a mass of incompetent nonsense has been written as on the subject of Jazz, owing to the very questionable musical qualifications of most of its contributors. I am sure, however, that the future will make it possible to divide the irresponsible paraphrasing of many immature Jazz enthusiasts from the serious research of the few workers who try to throw some light on this complex and most interesting phenomenon of our day. My interest in Jazz, to borrow a phrase from that excellent American writer on the subject, Winthrop Sargeant,<sup>1</sup> is "more clinical than rhapsodic" and so I propose not to go into the merits or otherwise of certain great personages in the history of Jazz, but to investigate soberly certain facets of it purely from the musical side. The element I want to investigate is that of *rhythm*. It is rhythm for which the most claims have been made as being quite novel in Jazz and which could yield new and unexpected fruits if grafted on to our existing musical culture.

The rhythmical peculiarities of Jazz which impressed and puzzled us as being something quite new are of two kinds; (1) syncopation; (2) cross-rhythm. As we will see in the course of our investigation, the two groups are not entirely self-contained and in many cases they overlap. Certain phenomena can be approached and explained through either of them.

The accepted definition of syncopation is: "An alteration of regular rhythm,

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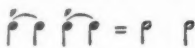
<sup>1</sup> Winthrop Sargeant: *Jazz, Hot and Hybrid* (Arrow Editions, New York, 1938).

produced by placing the strongest emphasis on the part of the bar not usually accented" (Grove: *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*). I find this definition not specific enough, as it includes rhythmical formulae like the irregular grouping of particles of the bar, shifting of accents, etc., which cannot properly be called syncopation. Syncopation in the narrower sense of the term would mean rhythmical figures where the stress normally falling on a certain beat is cancelled out by tying that normally stressed note to a preceding unstressed one, thus transferring the accent to the normally weak beat.

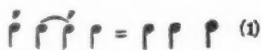
In a normal 4/4 bar (which alone will be the object of our investigations) the stresses fall thus:



The difference in intensity between the main stress and the secondary stress is not constant; according to circumstances (mainly due to tempo) it might be considerable or, on the other hand, the two stresses might be fairly equal. Now, if we tie a stressed note to an unstressed one this will create higher units of note-values without disturbing the normal fall of accents:



The result is a "straight" rhythm in which the accented parts of the bar can display their weight undisturbedly. The matter is quite different if an unaccented note is tied to an accented one:



Now the weight inherent in the third beat cannot materialize as it is not sounded or struck by itself, but is, in a way, held down by the previous second beat. Yet the stress we normally expect at that moment is not lost, but is included in the long note stretching from the second to the third beat. It lends that long note a special explosive tension, a kind of kinetic energy which cannot break out from the middle of the note but transfers its weight to the beginning of it. This peculiar tantalizing feeling of tension through the suppression of a strong stress which wants to break out is a typical sensation which accompanies syncopation.

Wilder Hobson in his book *American Jazz Music* uses the term "suspended rhythm" in the same sense as I have referred to the "suppression" of a strong beat. I find this expression particularly happy as the harmonic device of suspension has striking similarities with the rhythmic device of syncopation described above. In both cases a tension is created, keeping the listener in a state of expectancy and suspense until the next note is reached and the tension relaxed. It is well to remember that in the fourth species of strict counterpoint the rhythmic device of syncopation and the harmonic device of suspension are coupled and almost synonymous.

If the second beat is tied on to a minim, the result is another form of syncopated rhythm:

$$\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{ (2)}$$

These are the two possibilities for creating syncopation by suspending the third beat within a 4/4 bar.

If we want to cancel out the stress on the first beat by suspending it from the last beat of the previous bar, we must create two-bar units. The resulting syncopations will show the following possibilities:

(a) Syncopation *between* the bars only:

1. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	7. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
2. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	8. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
3. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	9. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
4. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	10. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
5. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	11. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
6. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	12. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

(b) Syncopation occurring *within* the bar as well:

1. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	7. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
2. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	8. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
3. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	9. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
4. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	10. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
5. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	11. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
6. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	12. ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

The syncopation with crotchets occurs usually in rather fast-moving pieces in "alla breve". Here are a few examples:

**Ex. 1**  
"THE BLUE ROOM"

**Ex. 2**  
"GOOD NEWS"

**Ex. 3**  
"HALLELUJAH"

**Ex. 4**  
"HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN"

The "Blue Room" quotation exhibits the simple syncopation shown in Example No. (1) on p. 31. The next one is based on rhythm No. 2 in Group A of the 2-bar units. "Hallelujah" uses the two-bar group No. 6 of Group B, whilst "Happy Days are Here Again" is built on the rhythmic pattern No. 8 of the same group.

More important for our purpose are the syncopated rhythms which can be obtained by splitting up the 4/4 bar into eight quavers and tying any of the "weak" quavers to a subsequent strong one. The natural distribution of stresses looks like this:



Exploring systematically all possibilities of tying weak quavers to strong ones the following 18 fundamental forms of syncopation within a bar can be obtained:

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 10. |
| 2. | 11. |
| 3. | 12. |
| 4. | 13. |
| 5. | 14. |
| 6. | 15. |
| 7. | 16. |
| 8. | 17. |
| 9. | 18. |

As can be seen, there are various types among these patterns. In one group the syncopation happens within one half of the bar only, the suppressed stresses being those of the weaker kind, *viz.*, on the second or fourth beat. In the other group the syncopation affects the stronger third beat, thus going over the middle of the bar. I suggest that the 18 patterns be re-grouped accordingly:

Group 1: Syncopation only affecting one or the other half of the bar:

- |    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 1. | } Syncopation in 2nd half only |
| 2. |                                |
| 3. |                                |
| 4. |                                |

5.		}	Syncopation in 1st half only
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			Syncopation in both halves

*Group 2:* Syncopation over the middle of the bar by suspending the third beat:

10.		}	Middle Syncopation only
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.		}	Middle combined with Syncopation in either half of the bar.
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			

The forms of syncopation in Group 1 are of a milder kind than those in Group 2. This is quite natural; the stronger the stress which has been suppressed by syncopation, the stronger the tension created by it. The second and fourth beats being the weakest stresses in the bar, the syncopation created by over-riding them will be of a rather mild nature. This kind of syncopation was typical of the dance music at the turn of the century, before the term Jazz was ever heard of. The dance which displays this type of rhythm is the "Cake-Walk", one of the predecessors of our present-day dances. It exhibited

continuously the rhythmic pattern of and etc., which, as can be seen, belongs to Group 1 (diminishing the notes to half of their values). This formula appears in American popular music much earlier than the time when Cake-walks existed; in tunes like "Chicken Reel" and "Turkey in the Straw" which, according to Sargeant, can be traced back as far as 1834, it is displayed very prominently.

**Ex. 5** "CHICKEN REEL" (2nd half)



**Ex. 6** "TURKEY IN THE STRAW" (2nd half)



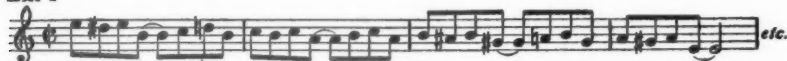
This relatively mild syncopation which did not yet affect the heavy accent in the middle of the bar was flourishing in popular music in the 'nineties; Debussy used the "Cake-Walk" rhythm abundantly for characterisation in his stylized dance pieces "Gollywog's Cake-Walk", "Le Petit Nigar" and "General Lavine, Eccentric".

The Ragtime which, according to Percy Scholes<sup>2</sup> first appeared as a printed sub-title on sheet music in 1896 (but is probably older than this date) went a step further in upsetting the four-square balance of the normal accents in the 4/4 bar. Contrary to the Cake-walk figure, which kept its syncopation within either half of the bar, the typical Ragtime rhythm makes a point of suppressing the strong third beat of the bar by suspending it from the fourth quaver:



This is definitely an advance on the Cake-walk rhythm as far as syncopation goes. The following example, "Temptation Rag" (1909), typifies the great number of Ragtimes written in that period:

Ex. 7



Examples like this were written by the dozen in the "Golden Age" of Ragtime in the years 1905 to 1910, mostly by pianists. The Ragtime was an instrumental species *par excellence* especially suited to the piano. Even up to most recent times Jazz Piano Tutors feature the "ragging" of chords and scales very prominently, as in the following examples:

Ex. 8



Ex. 9

(Original model)

(How to play it)



In fact, the middle-syncopation remained one of the mainstays of Jazz rhythm.

<sup>2</sup> *The Columbia History of Music*, Vol. V.

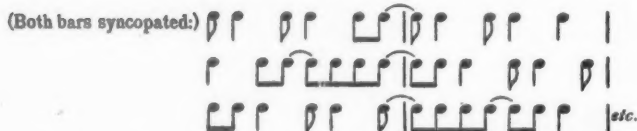
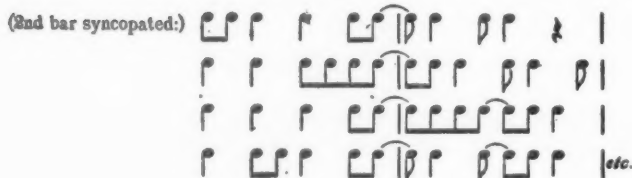
Apart from syncopation, there is another very strong reason for this with which I am going to deal presently when speaking of the polyrhythmical aspect of Jazz.

A stronger effect still is the suppression of the first beat of the bar by syncopation. To show the possibilities of this pattern we need two-bar groups, as the syncopation goes over the bar line. It would be too lengthy an affair to tabulate all possibilities of this syncopation, as any one-bar rhythm could be combined with any other one-bar rhythm, straight or syncopated, with the addition of the syncopation over the bar line.

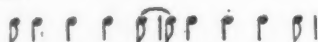
A very strong effect can be obtained by connecting two otherwise "straight" bars by suspending the first beat from the last quaver of the previous bar:



Or syncopated bars can be combined with non-syncopated ones:



It must, however, be mentioned that the effectiveness of syncopation does not increase with its quantity. On the contrary. A "through-syncopated" rhythmical unit loses all that punch which a single well-placed syncopation might produce. Syncopated accompaniment figures as used by Brahms and other romantic composers:



have a very mellow, undulating character. Compare this with the syncopated two-bar group:



and you will feel how much more strongly the latter one attacks you. It is a mistake to imagine that Jazz uses syncopation more than the classical composers; on balance it probably would turn out the other way. It is only that Jazz uses a certain limited type of syncopated patterns, but exploits them fully.

Jazz syncopation is mostly *anticipatory*. That is, the note which one expects in a straight form to come on a certain beat, will arrive *in advance* of that beat in the syncopated execution.<sup>3</sup> One can observe this most clearly where the straight "model" is available as the original tune and the syncopated variant follows in the Hot Chorus.<sup>4</sup>

A straight melodic group, for instance, like the following:

Ex. 10



would probably be syncopated in the following manner by a Jazz player:



At (a) the long final E is anticipated by a quaver; at (b) the anticipation of the D (originally the last note of the first bar) is added to this; at (c) the third beat of the first bar and the first beat of the second bar are anticipated (both strong beats, a very effective form of syncopation); at (d) there are three notes anticipated: the second and third notes in the first bar (A and C) and the E of the second bar. At (e) the second, third and fourth beats of the first bar are anticipated, but the second bar is left in its original form. (Notice how much weaker this variant is than either (c) or (d) where the strong first beat is anticipated.) Finally, at (f) the whole figure is "through-syncopated"—a less frequent form. If it is employed, its execution is quite different from similar rhythms of classical music. A Jazz player would play this figure with the notes slightly detached and giving about the same emphasis to each, as if, just by accident, he was slightly off the beat. The very fact that I had to describe at length this difference in style throws an interesting light on the notorious inadequacy of our musical notation in expressing finer shades of interpretation. What we see in print is just a bare outline of the music. It only comes alive

<sup>3</sup> To avoid any misunderstanding, I am not referring here to that kind of distortion of the rhythm of a tune which is done in singing, or its debased form "crooning". In this kind of rhythmical variation the delaying of the notes is quite common, but with values which our imperfect musical notation would not be capable of representing. The singer in those cases just retards or advances over the beat and makes it up again; the measure of the displacement of the notes happens in rather irrational time values. The best approximation for it is the simple and inclusive term "rubato". I am referring here only to the mathematically exact syncopations in rhythmical playing.

<sup>4</sup> Hot Chorus is the technical term for an improvised variation of the original tune, usually played by a solo instrument.

if we put in all those small intangible deviations from the mathematically exact values which we learn as a part of our musical training and employ unconsciously in playing. One note is slightly shortened here, another minutely stretched there; infinitesimal "ritenutos" and "stringendos" are employed within the phrases, and so forth. It is exactly the same problem as with the written word. There, too, no indication is given to the actor where to drop or to raise his voice, where to speed up or slow down his pace, etc. Yet only by employing this variability and flexibility of his delivery will he be able to bring the printed words to life and convey their meaning. Music in this respect must be regarded entirely as a *language*.

*Retardatory* syncopation, on the other hand—syncopation where a certain note appears later than its place would be in the straight form—is conspicuously rare in modern Jazz. Many of us will remember with horror how, at the beginning of the Jazz era, all kinds of "straight" musicians had to switch over to playing Jazz, which they did with the utmost contempt and without the slightest feeling for it. All they knew about Jazz was that one was expected to improvise, to play differently than written; but how, they had not the slightest idea. So they usually started distorting the rhythm by pulling the notes forwards and backwards, just as it came. They employed delaying syncopation a great deal, probably because it gave them time to think what to do next. They probably would have played the above little phrase of Example No. 10 like this:

Ex. 11



All these patterns employ retardative syncopation at the points marked x. The result is utterly dissimilar to anything one could properly call Jazz. To use a term of contempt, which any Jazz player would employ to describe them, they are "corny".<sup>5</sup>

This point shows clearly the "traditional" or "folk-music" nature of Jazz. As with other traditional cultures, you have to grow up to assimilate its accepted formulae until they become your second nature. Only then are you able to improvise quite spontaneously and naturally within the limits the tradition allows. Just as a Scottish bagpiper, a Hungarian gipsy or an Indian veena player would embellish the basic tune quite naturally in his own way or improvise quite freely according to certain laws, so the Jazz player quite unconsciously employs the formulae sanctioned by his tradition. He could not give any account of what kind of syncopation he uses here or there, or which melodic progressions he prefers; he simply combines those basic elements

<sup>5</sup> This term incorporates everything played in an old-fashioned, out-of-date way, incorrect in style, without the proper feeling for the tradition. A tune can be "corny", a player can be "corny" or his extemporization can be "corny". The word is probably derived from "corn-fed", meaning a sort of country-bumpkin-like player who does not know the tricks of the trade.

which he has heard millions of times, into a new, living unit at that moment. These elements are handed down from player to player in a way which can properly be called "traditional". It has its unwritten laws, its "do's" and "don'ts" which can be analysed as we are just doing with the rhythms employed. It is possible for somebody to learn the style synthetically, employing consciously the formulae used in that particular language, but if he does not entirely absorb the essence of that traditional culture, a misplaced accent, a note held a fraction longer or shorter than according to the traditional rules, will betray him as an outsider.

Tunes without any syncopation—of which there are many amongst the best products of Jazz literature—would almost invariably be played with a few well-placed anticipatory syncopations, something like this (syncopated notes marked with x):

**Ex. 12** "SOME OF THESE DAYS"  
(as written)

(as played)

or:

**Ex. 13** "DINAH"  
(as written)

(as played)

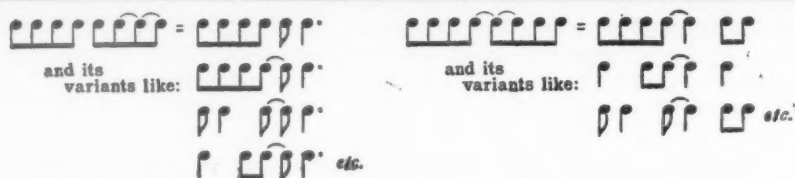
The straight figure  $\text{P P}$  usually becomes  $\text{P} \cdot \widehat{\text{P P}}$ , the so-called "Charleston" rhythm, on which I shall have something to say presently. The ordinary up-beat is also frequently anticipated and becomes  $\text{v} \widehat{\text{P}} \cdot \text{P}$  as shown in the following example:

**Ex. 14**

a) Straight form:

b) With syncopated up-beats:

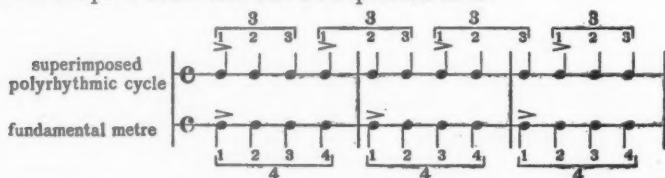
We have not yet mentioned syncopations derived from tying together more than two quavers, to which type the last examples belong. Using three-quaver units, we might get syncopated patterns like these:



We could go on exploiting still larger units consisting of four or five quavers tied together and suspended over the beats. All these elements could be combined with each other and with straight rhythms in two-bar units, giving us an infinite variety of possibilities of more or less usable syncopated patterns. Yet the scope of this article will not allow us to go into all these details, and, anyway, here we are treading on the borderline of those rhythmical figures which we can probably explain more satisfactorily from the other aspect so conspicuous in Jazz, namely, that of *polyrhythm*.

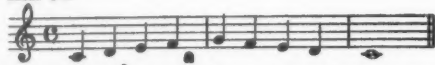
\* \* \* \* \*

Polyrhythm occurs when metrical groups consisting of a different number of units than indicated in the time signature are brought into conflict with the main metre. The possibilities of interplay of two different metres in music are manifold; yet again, Jazz utilizes only one certain limited group of these possibilities, but does it whole-heartedly. Jazz is notorious for the superimposition of cycles of three units above the four units of the fundamental beat. In its simplest form this can be expressed thus:



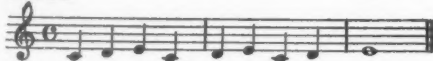
For the proper examination of polyrhythmic characteristics the bare rhythmic skeleton is not always sufficient as it was in the case of simple syncopation: we have to take into consideration the melodic line as well. The perfectly simple, straight rhythm ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ can support a melodic line which is also straight, like

**Ex. 15**



On the other hand it might, by the design of the melodic groupings, hide a polyrhythmic tendency, *e.g.*

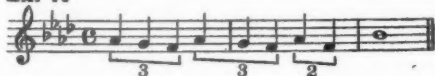
**Ex. 16**



In the latter case the fact that the melody returns to the C every third note registers in our consciousness in such a way that we hear that lowest note every time as a new start of a three-note group against the fundamental 4/4 metre.

A simple example of this kind of 3/4 against 4/4 can be seen in the well known song, "I can't give you anything but love":

Ex. 17



In another example, "I want to be happy", an additional syncopation is caused by the regular alternation of crotchets and minims, adding up to a 3/4 unit:

Ex. 18

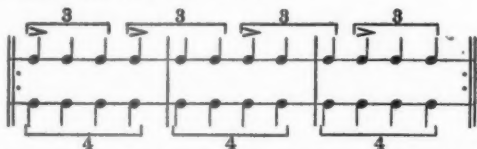


The 3/4 group can be further differentiated and broken up into smaller units like or might contain syncopation, as in the verse of "Varsity Drag":

Ex. 19



In this example, whilst the left hand of the piano represents the basic 4/4 metre, the right hand plays a motif in 3/4. Thus the player has a real physical sensation in his own body of the two systems clashing against each other. Needless to say, the basic metre always wins; the 3/4 superimposition only creates a temporary disturbance. In most cases this disturbance ends after two bars (e.g. in "I can't give you anything but love"), so that after two groups of three there is an incomplete group of two, making up a total of eight, and thus completing a two-bar group. On the other hand, it is possible to carry through the 3/4 cross-rhythm until it returns naturally into the basic metre: for that we need three full bars (12 beats) so that one group plays three times four against four times three of the other.



This possibility, however, which could be repeated indefinitely, is much rarer in Jazz for obvious reasons: it would require an "a tre battute" grouping, whilst Jazz is built up on even numbered bar groups.

(To be continued.)

# *A Programme Survey*

## *Concert Performances of Orchestral Music in England*

### *Season 1944-45*

BY

JOHN BOULTON

INTRODUCTION. This essay deals with the public concert work of eight Orchestra Societies employing orchestras of national standing. Its purpose is:—

- (a) to present a comprehensive review of the orchestral music played publicly in England during the present season;
- (b) to attempt a brief, critical analysis of this activity in its many aspects.

Whatever its cause, whatever its direction and whatever its ultimate influence upon the art, we are, at this time, involved in a national musical renaissance. Ten years ago and less it would not have been possible to write of eight concert-giving organizations each one of which was providing an important and sustained contribution to the musical scene. Nor could we have discussed the work of a score and more living British composers. With the data of a year's work before us it is of the greatest interest to inquire into the first, and socially and aesthetically, the most important, feature of this renaissance—the *kind* of music which is being played.

It was not found possible to include broadcast music, and on reflection this is as well. If music is to survive the present era in a state of vital productiveness, public concert-going will present, as it always has, the most telling criteria of the health of the art in England. The organizations whose programmes for the season have been made available, together with the names of the orchestras on which they are founded or which they employ, the conductors and the number of concerts included, are as follows:—

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY. Seven concerts employing various orchestras. In London.

Conductors: Barbirolli (Hallé), Boult (B.B.C.), Cameron (L.P.O., L.S.O.), Albert Coates (L.S.O.), Sargent (Liverpool P.O.).

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA. Twenty concerts. In London, Suburbs, Nottingham, Birmingham, Leicester, Blackpool, Bolton, Bristol.

Conductors: Beecham (mainly), Munch, Cameron, Fistoulari, Harrison.

B.B.C. SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA. Seven Concerts. In London. Conductor: Boult.

HALLÉ CONCERTS SOCIETY. Twenty-three concerts by Hallé Orchestra and a guest performance by Liverpool P.O. In Manchester.

Conductors: Barbirolli (permanent), Coates, Lambert, Sargent.

LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY. Forty-four concerts, all by Liverpool P.O. In Liverpool.

Conductors: Sargent (mainly), Louis Cohen (many performances), Beecham, Coates, Harold Gray, Maurice Miles, Alec Sherman, John Tobin.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM ORCHESTRA. Thirty-two concerts. In Birmingham.

Conductor: George Weldon (permanent).

NORTHERN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA. Five concerts in association with CEMA. In Leeds.

Conductor: Heinz Unger (permanent).



TABLE I

ORCHESTRAL COMPOSERS		PERFORMANCES OF SYMPHONIES						PERFORMANCES OF CONCERTOS						PERFORMANCES OF OTHER WORKS						Composer— Works totals
		R.P.S.	L.P.O.	B.B.C.	Halle	Liverpool	Birmingham	N.P.O.	Boyd Neel	R.P.S.	L.P.O.	B.B.C.	Halle	Liverpool	Birmingham	N.P.O.	Boyd Neel			
1	Abel ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5		
2	<i>Albin</i> ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
3	<i>Atterburg</i>	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
4	Arensky	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2		
5	Auber ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
6	Bach, J. C.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2		
7	BACH	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2		
8	<i>Barbieroli</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
9	<i>Bax</i> ..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
10	BEETHOVEN	..	1	8	2	3	6	4	..	2	1	1	3	9	5	..	..	6		
11	BERLIOZ	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	54		
12	<i>Berners</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12		
13	Bizet ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
14	Bliss ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5		
15	<i>Bloch</i> ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
16	Borodin	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
17	<i>Boughton</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12		
18	BRAHMS	..	2	1	2	3	3	..	..	..	..	1	4	2	2	..	1	1		
19	Bridge	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	26		
20	<i>Britten</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
21	Bruch ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	9		
22	Butterworth	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
23	Chabrier	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
24	Chausson	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4		
25	Chopin	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
26	Cimarosa	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3		
27	Clarke ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
28	Davies	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
29	DEBUSSY	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
30	DELIUS	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	1	4	2	1	..	10		
31	Dittersdorf	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2	1	1	2	1	3	4	2	..	23		
32	<i>Dohnanyi</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2		
33	Dukas ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4		
34	DVORÁK	..	1	..	2	4	2	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1		
35	ELGAR	..	1	1	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	18		
36	<i>Falla</i> ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	30		
37	Fauré	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4		
38	<i>Ferguson</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
39	Franck	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		
40	<i>Gardiner</i>	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4		
41	Geminiani	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1		

Capitals:—Composers of established greatness.  
Italics:—Contemporary composers.

[illegible]



**BOYD NEEL STRING ORCHESTRA.** Twenty-three concerts in London and provinces including Nottingham, Norwich, and tours in the Manchester, Liverpool, Lake and South Wales Districts.

Conductor: Boyd Neel (permanent).

In some cases the above details represent the entire work of the season, in others only part. Notable omissions are:

London Symphony Orchestra,\* advance details for which could not be supplied.

The Scottish Orchestra. The attitude of the Choral and Orchestral Union of Glasgow to my plans for this survey has kept Scottish music out. I cannot resist reproducing their reply to my letter requesting advance details:—

Dear Sir,

I have your letter of the 11th inst. I regret that all copies of our prospectus have been issued.

I am, yours faithfully,

J. BARNES (Secretary and Manager).

A further appeal brought no reply. I have since seen a little of the Scottish programme material. It is interesting and I greatly regret its omission. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those organizations which did respond, and particularly those secretaries and librarians to whom I have given trouble. (Peter Beavan, of the Boyd Neel Orchestra, copied out every detail of twenty-three concerts in careful hand print, and others went to almost equal inconvenience.)

In spite of these limitations, the data presented cover a very high, and therefore representative, proportion of the music played in public over a complete winter season. One hundred and sixty-two concert programmes provide the data for this analysis, and it is plainly not possible to reprint the actual programmes as well as their classified and tabulated items. A series of tables of composers represented and works played has been compiled, and these convey a complete and sufficiently detailed picture of the works performed. In the preparation of these tables I have taken considerable pains to keep out discrepancies. If any such have been overlooked I apologize beforehand. In this connection I would like to thank Mr. Geoffrey Sharp for help; he has always been able to spot an error, and, most useful, to make the right guess at misprints and wrong titles in programmes as printed.

**COMPOSER-WORK PERFORMANCES.** These are found in Table I, which gives the number of all works of all composers played in each of the concert series. To keep the analysis within bounds, only Symphonies and Concertos could be divided out from the mass of works. The remainder appear in the column headed "Other Works", and of necessity include works of quite minor importance as well as those whose nature puts them in the symphonic class. Some compromise was essential, and this subdivision, generally speaking, gives the right weighting to each set of composer-performances as between large-scale compositions and smaller works. The reader will know in most instances that composers like, *e.g.* Debussy, Richard Strauss, who did not write symphonies and/or concertos would be represented generally by major works designed to other patterns, and not by bagatelles. Similarly, the actual titles of single works by minor composers, *e.g.* Dukas, Nicolai, can be guessed accurately as a rule.

The characterization of some composers, as of "Established Greatness", depends upon the judgment of musicology at large spiced only slightly with my own views. Contemporary composers are those who were alive when Table I went to the printer.

The first notable thing is the order of popularity of the composers. The total performances for the first twelve are analysed in Table IA.

\* In this connection we may mention that two letters to Mr. Jay Pomeroy both failed to elicit any reply (Ed.).

TABLE 1A

Composer	Type of work			Total performances
	S.	C.	O.W.	
Beethoven ..	24	21	9	54
Mozart ..	8	12	30	50
Tchaikowsky ..	14	7	24	45
Elgar ..	4	2	24	30
Sibelius ..	18	1	9	28
Brahms ..	11	9	6	26
Wagner ..	Opera Excerpts			25
Delius ..	—	5	18	23
Bach ..	—	2	21	23
Dvořák ..	10	1	7	18
Schubert ..	13	—	2	15
Handel ..	—	1	13	14

S. symphonies; C. concertos; O.W. other works.

Beethoven and Mozart are where they should be, at the top. We live in the era of another revival—that of Tchaikowsky—and his high position reveals clearly the influence of popular taste on programme building. There are two outstanding reasons for the current Tchaikowsky cult. One is the inordinate piano-concerto rage which was fed in its infancy on No. 1 in B $\flat$  minor and has remained in the same key ever since. The other, more important, is the rapid advance of ballet as an English entertainment. The high position of Sibelius is a splendid sign, for this man wears the mantle of the great symphonists, and it is mostly by his symphonies that we are learning to know him. By the same token the position of Vaughan Williams, unplaced amongst the leaders and well down the table, is a tragedy. Think! It is English musical life we are considering; the one man who has the right to share with Sibelius the glory of contemporary greatness is, like his music, native to us, . . . and only one orchestra plays, in a whole year's music making, a fraction of his major work. The placing of Elgar lightens this picture a little. The fact that he has only six major work performances is to some degree a judgment on him. This great man fiddled far too much of his long life away in minor efforts.

The Brahms-Wagner balance is nicely kept. Perhaps when we have progressed to putting Wagner on the stage, where he should be, there will be room for more Brahms. With years of Bach "Proms" on the one hand and years of Delius-neglect on the other, it is especially pleasing to see the great and ancient contrapuntist and the great modern poet of the orchestra receive an equal esteem. Schubert and Dvořák are appropriately juxtaposed amongst the leaders. The renaissance of listening is, after all, a people's revolution, and these are the symphonists of the people. Because we are fortunate in having a first-class string orchestra in the country, Handel gets his due also.

To return to the main Table. Of the hundred and seven composers, forty-two are contemporary, and of these no less than twenty-two, over one half, are British. At first sight this is generous treatment for contemporary native music. Looking closer, and with an eye to the more considerable of our composers, we note that Walton, Bliss and Rubbra have only a *single performance* to their names, as have the great majority of the others. Moeran has two performances. All this is not greatly alleviated by the presentation of nine Britten performances. That number gives him parity with Vaughan Williams, which is more than this brilliant young experimentalist's share of the meagre limelight, on any reckoning. One cannot avoid inquiring as to what strange forces are at play to produce these queer figures. A mathematician friend was shown Table I, and his comment was: "Goodness, *are* there twenty-two living British composers." I assured him that there were more. "But, apart from one or two names, we are playing just as little of their work as is mathematically possible!" Precisely.

Of American, Russian and Continental contemporaries, the names are those the war

TABLE II

Symphonies	R.P.S.	L.P.O.	B.B.C.	Hallé	Liverpool	Birmingham	N.P.O.	Boyd Neel	Totals
Abel E♭ .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5
Atterburg No. 6. C .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Bach, J. C. B♭ .. .. .	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Bax No. 3 .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Beethoven No. 2 .. .. .	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
No. 3 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
No. 4 .. .. .	-	6	1	-	1	1	-	-	9
No. 5 .. .. .	-	2	-	1	2	1	-	-	6
No. 6 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
No. 7 .. .. .	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
No. 8 .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Berlioz ("Fantastique") .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Borodin No. 2 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2
Brahms No. 1 .. .. .	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	5
No. 2 .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
No. 3 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
No. 4 .. .. .	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
Britten ("Simple") .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
Dittersdorf ("Little") .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Dvořák No. 2 .. .. .	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	4
No. 4 .. .. .	-	-	1	-	2	-	1	-	4
No. 5 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
Elgar No. 1 .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
No. 2 .. .. .	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
Franck .. .. .	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3
Haydn No. 88 in G .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
No. 97 in C .. .. .	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
No. 100 in G .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
No. 104 in D .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
No. 13 in G .. .. .	1†	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Hely-Hutchinson ("Carol") .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Moeran .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Mozart No. 29 in A .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
No. 34 in C .. .. .	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
No. 35 in D .. .. .	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
No. 39 in E♭ .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
No. 41 in C .. .. .	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
Prokofiev ("Classical") .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Rachmaninoff No. 2 .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Schubert No. 5 .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
No. 6 in C .. .. .	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
No. 8 .. .. .	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	4
No. 9 in C .. .. .	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
Shostakovitch No. 5 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Sibelius No. 1 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
No. 2 .. .. .	-	-	1	1	2	1	-	-	5
No. 3 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
No. 4 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
No. 5 .. .. .	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	3
No. 6 .. .. .	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
No. 7 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	4
Tchaikowsky No. 3 .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
No. 4 .. .. .	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	4
No. 5 .. .. .	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	5
No. 6 .. .. .	-	5	-	1	-	1	-	-	7
Thompson No. 2 .. .. .	-	-	-	1*	-	-	-	-	1
Walton .. .. .	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
V. Williams ("Sea") .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
("Pastoral") .. .. .	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1

† In explanation of this somewhat ambiguous classification the Honorary Secretary of the R.P.S. quotes Edwin Evans' concert notes, as follows:—"There is some confusion about the numbering of the Haydn Symphonies. This one figures as No. 13 in the selection of 24 which is most frequently found in orchestral libraries, but in Mandyczewski's comprehensive list it appears as No. 88."

\* One movement only of this work played.

years have taught us to expect. In view of the times, it is unprofitable to criticize the quantity, but what we have recently tasted of American, Russian and refugee composers, and the news which liberation has loosed from musical Paris, give us the right to expect more foreign contemporary work than this in peace-time programmes.

There is space to comment further only on the almost complete eclipse of Mendelssohn. Every sign of eradication of the Victorian blight on native art is, in itself, welcome. Here, however, there are some regrets, not the least of which being that Tchaikowsky should have taken Mendelssohn's place.

**SYMPHONIES.** In Table II is a detailed list of symphonies against the orchestras who play them. Beethoven has twenty-four performances with none for the First and the Ninth. (What Olympian teeth-gnashing when, year in year out *Messiah* and *Dream of Gerontius* send up their strains and never, or hardly ever, is the marriage of choir and orchestra consummated in his own name by the "generous Englishmen".) For the apparent popularity of the Fourth we have largely the Beecham tour to thank. In spite of the War and the morse code, the Fifth still holds the place it will probably hold for ever. The Eighth continues to be neglected.

Of the eleven Brahms performances only one orchestra plays the Third. If, as I believe it does, this reflects the usual selection, they ought all to know better. Of the satisfactory number of Sibelius performances, including all seven, most orchestras have very properly relied on the Second, Fifth and/or Seventh for their share of the good work. These are the works which will best recruit Sibelius-lovers, and the advance made in doing so is already evident in the fact that in recent years the Fifth has joined the other two in popularity. Tchaikowsky performances take on the familiar pattern, with the Fourth, the most nearly symphonic of all his works, gaining ground.

**CONCERTOS.** An outstanding feature of present-day audiences is the tremendous popularity of pianoforte concertos. That this has something to do with a love of spectacle and an innate liking for "hero-" or "star-worship" on the part of the populace at large is almost certainly true. The sight of a virtuoso grappling with a work—the more difficult the better—on eight feet odd of shiny, black piano gives an edge to a concert for a huge proportion of the musical public. I have heard so many steady concert-goers say that they liked such and such a conductor best because they so liked watching him, that I shall go on believing in the "spectacle" element in the mass appreciation of music. So long as one admits to more aesthetic delight in the presence of an actual orchestra than in sitting before even the finest radio in the world, and most of us do, there *must* be something in it.

The proportions of piano concertos played per concert are as follows:—Birmingham, 27 concertos in 32 concerts; B.B.C., 6 in 7; N.P.O., 4 in 5; Liverpool, 30 in 44; R.P.S., 4 in 7; L.P.O., 9 in 20; Hallé, 8 in 24. Such popularity is not altogether a bad thing, since much fine orchestral music lies in this form. But the question arises: Does the musical value of the concertos most played justify, in terms of art, the emphasis placed on the form? The detailed piano concerto performances are shown in Table III, and a study of this gives us as much of an answer to that question as present data allow. The most popular concertos with programme builders are:—

Grieg in A minor	..	Eight performances
Tchaikowsky No. 1	..	Six "
Beethoven No. 3	..	Six "
Liszt No. 1	..	Five "
Beethoven No. 4	..	Five "

These figures should be read alongside the *total* of all Mozart piano concerto performances, which is eight. An answer to our question cannot, therefore, be given in terms of art; it can only be given in terms of popular appeal and efforts made to meet it. This statement does not necessarily imply criticism, but is made in the belief that audiences will learn in time. Grieg, Tchaikowsky and Liszt apart, the record of concertos played, if we must



TABLE III

Piano Concertos			R.P.S.	L.P.O.	B.B.C.	Hallé	Liverpool
Bach	No. 1, D min.	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
	No. 5, F min.	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
Beethoven	No. 1	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Solomon
	No. 2	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Solomon
	No. 3	.. ..	Matthews	Merrick	-	M. Maddison	Solomon
	No. 4	.. ..	-	-	Smith	Smith	Greene
	No. 5	.. ..	-	-	-	Matthews	Solomon
							M. Maddison
							Solomon
							Matthews
Bloch	"Concerto Grosso"	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
Brahms	No. 1	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Curzon
	No. 2	.. ..	-	-	Elinson	Solomon	-
Chopin	No. 2	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Elinson
	"Grand Polonaise"	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Miller
Delius		.. ..	-	-	-	Forbes	-
Dohnanyi	"Nursery Variations"	.. ..	Smith	-	-	-	Smith
Falla	"Nights in the Gardens of Spain"	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Wearing
Franck	"Symphonic Variations"	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Ramsden
Grieg		.. ..	-	E. Joyce (2 perfs.)	M. Lympny	-	E. Joyce
							M. Lympny
d'Indy	"Symphony on French Mountaineer's Song"	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Wearing
Ireland		.. ..	-	-	Curzon	-	Curzon
Kabalevsky		.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
Khachaturyan		.. ..	-	-	-	-	M. Lympny
Liszt	No. 1	.. ..	-	N. Henriot (4 perfs.)	-	-	-
	"Hungarian Fantasia"	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Wearing
Mendelssohn	No. 1	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
Mozart	K466, D min.	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
	K482, E $\flat$	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
	K488, A	.. ..	-	S. Shafir	-	-	-
	K491, C min.	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Curzon
	K537, D	.. ..	-	-	-	Curzon	-
	K595, B $\flat$	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
Prokofiev	No. 3..	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Mewton-Wood
Rachmaninoff	No. 2	.. ..	-	-	Moiseiwitsch	-	Horsley
	No. 3	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
	"Paganini Rhapsody"	.. ..	Moiseiwitsch	-	-	-	Smith
Ravel	"Left Hand"	.. ..	-	-	-	Curzon	-
Rimsky-Korsakov		.. ..	-	-	-	-	Miller
Saint-Saens	No. 2	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-
Schumann		.. ..	Solomon	-	-	-	Mewton-Wood
							Kentner
Tchaikowsky	No. 1	.. ..	-	N. Henriot	Pouishnoff	Curzon	Curzon
	No. 2	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Moiseiwitsch
	No. 3	.. ..	-	-	-	-	Moiseiwitsch
Turina	"Symphonic Rhapsody"	.. ..	-	-	-	-	-

	Liverpool	Birmingham	N.P.O.	Totals
	-	K. Long	-	1
	-	P. Sellick	-	1
	Solomon	I. Kohler	-	2
	Solomon	-	-	1
	Solomon	Mewton-Wood	-	6
	Greene	-	-	-
	Solomon	M. Hess	-	5
	M. Maddison	-	-	-
	Solomon	Taylor	-	4
	Matthews	-	-	-
	-	I. Kohler	-	1
	Curzon	-	-	1
	-	Smith	-	3
	Elinson	Elinson	-	2
	Miller	-	-	1
	-	-	-	1
	Smith	P. Sellick	-	3
	Wearing	-	-	1
	Ramsden	-	-	1
	E. Joyce	E. Joyce	P. Sellick	8
	M. Lympny	M. Lympny	-	-
	Wearing	-	-	1
	Curzon	-	-	2
	-	Ridgway	-	1
	M. Lympny	-	-	1
	-	I. Kohler	-	5
	Wearing	-	-	1
	-	England	-	1
	-	Matthews	-	1
	-	Osborn	-	1
	-	Taylor	-	2
	Curzon	S. Shafir	-	2
	-	-	-	1
	-	E. Joyce	-	1
	Mewton-Wood	Mewton-Wood	-	2
	Horsley	Pouishnoff	-	4
	-	Smith	-	-
	-	Horsley	I. Kohler	2
	Smith	-	-	2
	-	-	-	1
	Miller	-	-	1
	-	-	England	1
	Mewton-Wood	I. Scharrer	-	4
	Kentner	-	-	-
	Curzon	Curzon	Isserlis	6
	Moiseiwitsch	-	-	1
	Moiseiwitsch	-	-	1
	-	E. Joyce	-	1



piano works. The Bach concertos are absent, but for so few works the list is sound and one applauds the seven performances given to four great modern pieces in addition to the single performance of Elgar's classic.

Concerto performances for other instruments are detailed in Table V, the shrunken state of which emphasizes the fact that only one half of the orchestras play any such concertos. Again, some piano works could well have made way for concertos employing other instruments. If we fostered a "market" for the latter we might eventually produce as many good viola, cello, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, horn and trumpet players as we have competent pianists, which would be of more value to orchestral music. There is nothing to criticize in the works listed, and the Beethoven triple, the Weber Clarinet and Scarlatti Oboe are all rare friends we are glad to see with our favourites. There are too few cello concertos to permit of the continued neglect of Bax' piece. Say what one will about this particular work, anything that Bax has done on the major-work scale deserves more perseverance than has generally been shown.

**THE ORCHESTRAS AND THEIR PROGRAMMES.** In abstracting the actual programmes concert by concert I was able to compare closely the features of programme building as between the different organizations. There is not space for extended comment, which would require the quotation of programmes in their original form. Some features, mostly traceable from the Tables, are deserving of comment:—

*Royal Philharmonic Society.* Well balanced programmes. In six out of seven concerts there is at least one important modern work, including one first performance.

*London Philharmonic Orchestra.* On tour, mostly under Beecham, so that many programmes are built up from relatively few works; there is nothing unexpected. As we should expect, Berlioz, Delius and Sibelius are represented in well-designed programmes which are not improved by the choice of concertos, unfortunately. Modern composition is represented by Ibert and Britten under Munch.

*B.B.C.* Each of the seven concerts is a satisfying and varied experience as ham and eggs, Yorkshire pudding and beer are a satisfying and varied meal. No wine, no caviare, not even coffee and cheese. The criticism here implied must be accompanied by the observation that this orchestra does a fair share of innovating in its broadcast music and occasionally gives musicianly listeners a treat. Concertos again! . . . we have had, and are to have, so many opportunities on and off the radio of hearing Grieg in A minor, Tchaikowsky in B $\flat$  minor, and Mendelssohn in E minor, that one might properly have expected them to be left alone in as short a series as this. Mr. Harold Holt probably thought differently.

*Hallé Orchestra.* The concerts are in two parallel series. The "Popular" concerts provide, again, solid, well-balanced fare with here and there a dash of sauce and Elgar's Second Symphony as one *plat-du-jour*. Two piquant tit-bits are Barbirolli's own orchestration of a movement of the Debussy quartet and an isolated movement of Randall Thompson's Second Symphony, which interesting work Barbirolli tells me he intends to play *in toto* at some future date. It is clear that in this series, too, the intention is to keep the old well-loved pots a-boiling in the interest of the new music-hungry public.

The "Subscription Series" are a different matter for a different purpose. The main feature is the playing of all seven Sibelius symphonies. Debussy's Preludes and Extracts from *Pelleas*, a Gordon Jacob concerto and a suite by Barbirolli are all first Manchester performances and Deems Taylor's *Marco Takes a Walk* is a first English performance. There are the Delius Violin and Piano concertos, the best of Richard Strauss, voices and orchestra in Elgar's *Sea Pictures* and Ravel's *Scheherazade*, a Brahms evening with the Third Symphony and the First Piano Concerto, and much else in what is undoubtedly the most interesting and artistic series of concerts being played anywhere this season.

*Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.* This orchestra is presenting no less than forty-four concerts in Liverpool, plus an as yet unannounced further series of eight. Eight

"Popular" concerts are distinguished by performances of Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* and Berlioz's *Fantastique*, Khachaturyan's Piano and Delius' Violin concertos. In two instances there are two piano concertos in one concert, a bad practice about which more will be said. This series is more adventurous and less well balanced than the B.B.C. and Hallé popular concerts.

A further Twenty Concerts at Popular Prices can be heard incredibly cheaply, and are one of the best series of the kind ever offered. As well as the most loved, and some over-loved, classics, there are a few rarely heard works and a relatively liberal number of modern ones, especially by British composers. Elgar, Delius, Holst, Vaughan Williams, Bax and Moeran are all represented by major works. It is right that these composers should be brought to popular audiences, and when they are accompanied by what is best in classical and romantic music of direct appeal, a pattern and a purpose become apparent in the programmes which include them.

It is an irony that this Orchestra's "Subscription" series of sixteen concerts is open to grave criticism on several counts. Apart from Beethoven's Triple Concerto, the first performance of Vaughan Williams' Oboe Concerto, Bax's Violin Concerto and Third Symphony, Moeran's Symphony, and Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, the items are every-day listening of no greater connoisseur interest than the same orchestra's popular series. Many programmes are very badly balanced, and it needs to be pointed out that whether a concert is intended for the cognoscenti or for the rawest recruits to concert-going it must still be designed as an *experience*, not as an aural catalogue. The general lack of programme-sense finds its clearest expression in the five programmes where two concertos for one instrument are presented in one bill. This practice is wholly bad. Solomon (six Beethoven concertos in three afternoons!) bears the brunt of this drudgery and he, no less than Sargent who conducts, should know better, for they are both artists of marked sensitivity. Who is to blame? My guess is that Solomon and Moiseiwitsch charged a smaller rate for delivery in quantity and that the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, Limited, are to blame. Mention of these names and study of the prospectus suggests a possible reason for these being "Subscription" concerts: You pay to hear the virtuosi—not the music—a bad policy which has been markedly overworked in the recent past.

The Liverpool organization deserve a good deal of praise; they are alone responsible for more than one half of the major contemporary British works played this season, as well as for a number of rarely heard works by the established masters.

*City of Birmingham Orchestra.* Piano concertos must be mentioned again because here they dominate the programmes to the extent of twenty-seven concertos in thirty-two programmes, which represents all the piano-orchestral writing of any proven popularity, good, bad and indifferent.

Most of music's purple passages are here besides enough of the best standard classics to form the basis of thirty-two weekly concerts. There are, as well, a number of rarely heard gems of varied lustre, including unusual performances of Bloch, Butterworth (*The Banks of Green Willow*), Atterburg, Holst and Geminiani. Add to this the hearing, casual often in the choice of works, but still a hearing, given to a large number of living composers, and the fairly well-planned nature of the Birmingham prospectus is apparent.

*Northern Philharmonic Orchestra.* Five nicely balanced concerts consist of very well-known standard works, Eric Coates' *London Suite* looking uncomfortably out of place.

*Boyd Neel String Orchestra.* This orchestra is on tour so that many works and some whole programmes are repeated often. There is, still, an unusual variety of music presented and one cannot well imagine better designed programmes for a string orchestra. Because of the medium there is a refreshing number of works by the primitives; nowhere else can orchestral work by Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Dittersdorf, Abel, Purcell and Marcello be heard—and people everywhere should have the opportunity to hear them. There are also Warlock, Boughton, Howells, Britten, Honegger and Rubbra to make clear the important point that the chamber orchestra has a living present and a certain future.

**VIRTUOSI.** The Concerto Tables give the identities of soloists against the works they play. Of pianists there are thirty-one, almost all British, playing forty-two works. Solomon has a current repertoire of eight works, Curzon of six, Cyril Smith and Eileen Joyce of five, and Moiseiwitsch, Matthews and Mewton-Wood four apiece. Women are identifiable in the table by their first initials. Comparison of them with the men shows that only they play Grieg and Liszt, they play no Brahms and much less than their due proportion of Beethoven. This is interesting, but, unfortunately, the data are not sufficiently full for me to pursue the indicated case that there are important sex-proclivity differences. It is good to see young performers like Matthews, Mewton-Wood and Elinson playing exacting works and adding to their stock. Elinson should be given more work to do. A Chopin-Liszt exponent of almost unsurpassable attainment, who also plays Brahms, is distinctly worth watching and encouraging.

The other soloists are the familiar names in the familiar works. Sammons has set the seal of greatness on the concertos of Delius and Elgar. May he be joined soon in his distinction by Grinke similarly reflecting the lustre of Bax' work.

There should be more playing of concertos for other instruments. If there were, perhaps we should breed the number of first-rate orchestral players we shall need as we gradually grow into a nation of music lovers.

**CONDUCTORS.** There are eighteen conductors listed under the various concert organizations on p. 42. Sir Thomas Beecham stands out as the biggest figure, doing, incidentally, by no means the biggest work. Closest to his stature, which is quite that of any living maestro of any nationality, are three English conductors, happily younger. These are Sir Adrian Boult, Malcolm Sargent and John Barbirolli, of whom the last named is young enough to face a future as distinguished as, and, we might hope and believe, less capricious than, that of Sir Thomas. Between these and the newest names is a body of solid talent with few passengers. It is invidious to mention more names, but of the newest arrivals Cohen and Weldon can certainly be picked out for distinguished futures given the right encouragement. Constant Lambert lifts himself out of the class of solid talent on frequent occasions when he conducts great music; he will attain real distinction when he tires of the enervating and emasculating influence of the ballet. Boyd Neel is a special case and must be given the highest praise for the perfection to which his string orchestra attains.

**CHORAL WORKS.** These have not been considered in the main analysis. Two organizations only give details of choir-with-orchestra concerts, and Birmingham announces three with unpublished programmes. The works detailed are:—

Hallé Orchestra and Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus.

Verdi .. .. . Requiem Mass.

Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Liverpool Philharmonic Choir.

Handel .. .. . *Messiah*

and

Tippett .. .. . *A Child of our Time*

Mozart .. .. . Requiem.

and

Elgar .. .. . *The Dream of Gerontius*

This inadequate and rather sad picture may possibly mean that there are not enough good choirs. If that is true and the continued vitality of music in these islands is of any importance, it should be remedied—and soon. The Church, cradle and past custodian of choral music, has chosen, in all its denominations, to forsake its heritage of art music for a mess of metrical psalms and mediaeval miscellany. Public concert-giving organizations must add its past responsibilities to their own present ones. God will listen to the singing of Byrd, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Rossini, Mendelssohn, Berlioz and Verdi in the concert hall just as we should like to, and a revival of choral music will touch springs of enthusiasm which have always been latent in this country.

**FIRST PERFORMANCES.** A review of this nature cannot be concluded without reference to the first performances which have taken place during the season covered. These comprise one British work and two American, as follows:—

*Vaughan Williams* : Concerto for Oboe and Strings; Liverpool P.O. and Leon Goossens. Liverpool.

*Roy Harris* : Chorale for Orchestra; L.P.O. London. (R.P.S. Concert.) (First concert performance.)

*Deems Taylor* : *Marco takes a Walk*; Hallé Orchestra. Manchester. (First English performance.)

This is something for the Americans to write home about. For ourselves, it is the same old story of neglect, unless, in fact, no British composer other than Vaughan Williams had an unperformed orchestral work on his hands. If by orchestral work we mean a sizeable composition, this is, of course, possible; ballets and rather-bigger-than-chamber pieces seem to be *de rigueur* with many of the younger men.

**CONCLUSION.** Space has not permitted that full discussion of the data of this review which I feel the trouble taken in their collation justifies. If, therefore, the following observations have something of an arbitrary air, the reader is invited to do some steady browsing through the various Tables and draw his own conclusions. A shortened selection of mine is:—

*That public music-giving and concert-going is keeping pace, in a quantitative sense, with the forward movement of music in England.*

*That all concert organizations, orchestras and conductors do not show an equal sense of responsibility towards native audiences and native composers.*

*That London has lost all claim to being a national centre of music.*

*That we have a satisfactorily growing cadre of gifted conductors and soloists which includes many young ones and might well include more.*

*That ballet performances and pianoforte concertos are active, but evil, influences on popular taste in orchestral music.*

*That a clear attempt at giving the rapidly growing musical public what it wants is being made and that this should continue, but with more of an ear for the best music and less of an eye to the box-office.*

*That if the present number of orchestras continue to work on the present level, with adequate rehearsals and the steady inculcation of orchestral discipline, we shall, soon after the end of the war, have orchestras comparable with, if not surpassing, those of the pre-war Continent.*

#### REVIEWERS

A. L.	—	ANN LIVERMORE
G. A.	—	GERALD ABRAHAM
W. S.	—	WILLIAM SAUNDERS
E. H. M.	—	E. H. MEYER
G. N. S.	—	EDITOR
H. J. F.	—	HUBERT J. FOSS
T. B. L.	—	T. B. LAWRENCE
E. H. W. M.	—	E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN

## Concerts

### An Education in Itself

#### BEECHAM'S SECOND ALBERT HALL CONCERT

THE fundamental truth which emerged from Beecham's concert with the London Philharmonic Orchestra on 2nd November is one which we should never have forgotten: that the music of Berlioz must not be travestied by conductors with second-class minds. *La Chasse royale et Orage* (the French title sounds so much more ominously supercharged than our pompous English equivalent) is not an easy piece of music—those who know it well will forgive the meiosis—it has no form but its own, which is in part the reason why it butters no parsnips for the dullard. Harty had its secret: Beecham has it now. For complete coherence it depends upon the services of a conductor who will realize that he *must* give it an eerie four-dimensional continuity, which alone will emphasize the punctuality and concision of the composer's imagination: in addition, the conductor must balance his interpretation throughout with a view to creating the greatest possible cataclysm at the climax. Sir Thomas did all this and more; by so much are Berlioz and the audience in his debt. The *Marche Troyenne* has its own glories, in particular the *coda*, but to follow the *Chasse royale* is a major ordeal which in this case diminished its thrills.

Previously we had been given a meticulous, clean-limbed and highly lyrical reading of the *Prince Igor* overture: followed by the Beethoven B flat Symphony which I have never heard Sir Thomas do well—and this was no exception, the first three movements flagged and only the *finale* "came off".

After the interval Schubert's innocent-seeming "little" C major Symphony (No. 6) preceded the Berlioz. For years critics have been rude at its expense and conductors have neglected it. Nevertheless, it remains a masterpiece of wit, defined by Dr. Johnson as "the copulation of unexpected ideas" (wit, not the symphony); and Sir Thomas' prolific imagination prevented Schubert's repetitiousness from dulling the first-class dialectical sorties in which this delightful little work abounds. Those who have heard Beecham conduct it will not take kindly to hearing it abused.

As an encore we had a very spruce and highly polished version of the overture to *Figaro*.

#### Albert Hall Concert: 19 November

##### CONTRASTED STYLES

Bizet's *Patrie* overture is weak and flamboyant, Rimsky-Korsakov's *May Night* is vaguely discursive, and even Sir Thomas Beecham is unable to integrate music which is essentially patchwork. The last and the first stages of this concert were therefore disappointing. Mozart's *kleine Nachtmusik* and one of Haydn's greatest symphonies, No. 97 in C, completed a first half which continuously promised to sparkle but never quite succeeded. For one thing the second and last movements of the Mozart ambled at a leisurely pace which, unlike Sir Thomas' own, failed to carry conviction; and, secondly, it was impossible to "put over" eighteenth (or any other) century music in a chamber style before a large Albert Hall audience, at least half of whom seemed to be afflicted with noisy and uncontrollable spasms of coughing. This comparative failure, then, must be attributed to public bad manners. Music-lovers must control their coughs or stay away.

The outstanding achievements of the afternoon were *En Saga*, the first work of Sibelius to bear the hall-mark of genius, the *Good Friday Music* and the Johann Strauss waltz which was given as an encore. Sibelius and Wagner drowned the coughing, while in the Strauss it miraculously ceased—I shall resist the temptation to digress on public taste!

These three works brought out all that is finest in the Beecham-L.P.O. partnership: unity of purpose, range of tone and precision of execution, of an order that stands as a lesson to all other British interpreters—a lesson which none-the-less is not being assimilated.

### Three Beecham Concerts

A model performance of the *Flying Dutchman* overture was the outstanding feature of the concert on 30th November, with the first and last movements of the *Haffner* Symphony almost equally convincing. Sibelius' Seventh was displayed as an essay in musical logic, to which end the more rhetorical elements in its make-up were noticeably subdued. For the writer too much of the deliberate roughness of the score was fined down—contrast, for example, Golschmann's recent recording with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (His Master's Voice DB 6167–69). Between the Wagner and the Mozart was sandwiched a clean, if rather academic performance of the Brahms-Haydn Variations in which, as so often, No. 7 (*Grazioso*) was taken rather too fast. To overcome the inconvenience and delays of present-day travel I had to leave before the performance of Bizet's Suite *L'Arlesienne*.

The concert on 1st December, at which, unfortunately, THE MUSIC REVIEW could not be represented, consisted of Méhul's overture *La Chasse du Jeune Henri*, Beecham's Handel Suite *The Faithful Shepherd*, three pieces from *Die Meistersinger* and the *Eroica* Symphony.

The following day's concert was a disappointment. The last three movements of the *Jupiter* Symphony went well, as did most (but not all) of the Dvořák Symphonic Variations. While in *On hearing the first Cuckoo in Spring*, Sir Thomas coaxed the orchestra to within measurable distance of his pre-war performances of Delius. Beecham's piano Concerto on Handelian themes has grace, charm and wit: but it is music unsuited to the Albert Hall and the performance, with Betty Humby Beecham as soloist, was far from ideal. An unfortunate slip by the flute momentarily disconcerted both conductor and orchestra, while there is much wood-wind detail in this score which the present L.P.O. players found uncomfortably difficult. Delius' *Summer Night on the River* was but a shadow of its proper self and Weber's *Oberon* overture is too good a piece of theatre in its own right to need any "hamming" even as a concession to war-time audiences.

G. N. S.

### Book Reviews

*The Chorus Master*. By Leslie Woodgate. Pp. 41. (Ascherberg, Hopwood & Crew, Ltd.) 1944. 5s.

Many of us old admirers of Mr. Woodgate may find this book disappointing, especially since his experience both in range and variety must exceed that of most men in his field alive to-day. While an informal lecture may be none the worse, possibly the better, for an innocent half-truth here or a Chestertonian exaggeration there, we look for greater exactitude of statement in a text-book. And the author has permitted himself a discursiveness that, in a small volume of 41 pages, seems prodigal. Chapter I enters with the aphorism that in the teaching of music "keenness is the keynote" and, later, "The first qualification of the Chorus Master is keenness". As the same is true of body-snatching and billiards and a hundred things there is no point in it. Nor is there much in saying that to belong to a really good choir is as important as belonging to a good football or cricket team. Will this cause the spirit of the idealistic choralist to glow within him? Avowing a preference for old notation for reading purposes the author chooses *inter alia* the unfortunate argument that it gives the singer a sense of key, the implication being that tonic sol-fa does not. Might it not be granted to sol-fa-ists that the whole principle of their craft, whether for good or evil, is precisely a sense of key?

Voice-training concerns the individual. It is a gigantic subject, not to be hit off in a

few sentences, and it seems an error in such a short treatise to mix it up with choir-singing, a collective study, which, though dependent ultimately upon the individual, should be treated as far as possible collectively, along, for that matter, with many other aspects of choral technique bristling with interest that the author has not even mentioned.

In affirming the original meaning of the word "diction" (*i.e.* in the art of letters) by pointing victoriously to the *O.E.D.*, what gain at this time of day in denying that the word has long had a useful technical significance in the musician's vocabulary? But the most unaccountable thing in the book is the author's opinion that

"people with perfect pitch tend to sing out of tune because they produce a note dead in tune without any vibrato and thereby lose all the natural harmonics of the note".

What on earth has perfect pitch to do with the ability or non-ability to sing vibrato? And what has an imposed or cultivated vibrato to do with the natural harmonics of the note? (singular number?). He says:

"Ask a violinist to play a note without any vibration whatever, then ask him to add his normal vibrato to the note. In one instant the sound becomes alert and alive and *more in tune* (our italics) than at first".

So now we know why Joachim was said to play out of tune. No; the author must not be allowed to ride off on that generalization. String-players must be presumed to have played in tune long before vibrato was invented. If the excursion may be pardoned, the reviewer, who learnt the violin from a distinguished pupil of Joachim, never even heard of vibrato until he had been fiddling for about 12 years, and even then, his first experience being "Chirgwin, the White-eyed Kaffir" with a one-stringed something-or-other, thought that Chirgwin's wobbling was part of the comicality of a music-hall act. Eugene Goossens once asked at a Musical Association meeting by what miracle could you have pure orchestral intonation with all the strings wobbling in different directions at different times?

In a necessary warning against letting the voice go on after a final consonant we are told that, if it does, the sound *er* "invariably happens", *e.g.* *en-er*. It doesn't, really. What ensues is a vowel sound that might be *ah* or *ö* or *ü* (as in *but*). The mere fact that those sounds are indifferently recognized in the spelling *er* by the masses in London and the Home Counties should not cause the writer to forget that there are choirs in other parts of the United Kingdom—which makes it of prime importance that, if phonetics are used, some more faithful rendering of them, some greater universality of apprehension, should be employed. The *er* of a Midlander, a Northerner or of a Scot is something real, and if you tell him that in a voiced final consonant, as in "men", he will, if he over-explodes it, be adding *er* to it, he will be as stupified, and you will be as incorrect, as if you told him he would be adding *hokey-pokey*. With this exception chapters 5 and 6 on *Ensemble* contain some shrewd observations about balance, phrasing and dynamics with the master-hand manifesting itself now and again; and a following chapter on *Stick Technique*, a still too neglected study among amateurs, is sound and thoughtful and clearly stated.

It is regrettable that no less than six pages (a table of Phonetic Pronunciation) out of 41 should be devoted to a perpetuation of the preposterous Italian pronunciation of Latin. Hard luck on those that have been schoolchildren in the last three generations. Well may they sob "Sell no more drink to my father"!

Mr. Woodgate's unquestionable sincerity throughout this treatise, together with his known experience, prompt the belief that he has the right book in him. Let him give himself elbow-room and write it.

T. B. L.

*Musical Articles from the "Encyclopaedia Britannica".* By Donald Francis Tovey.

Edited by Hubert J. Foss. Pp. viii + 251. (O.U.P.) 1944. 12s. 6d.

There must be few general collections of musical articles originally written for publication elsewhere, that have had more justification for re-issue in separate book-form, than this. In spite of all the high-falutin' nonsense about an encyclopaedia being "a circle of complete knowledge", the average student, to say nothing of the man-in-the-street, merely regards it as a glorified dictionary, and uses it accordingly. And, as a rule, he does not use it often. The smallest encyclopaedia is not exactly a tome that one carries

about in one's waistcoat pocket, and there are few modern houses in which the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* can be comfortably accommodated. Again, the serious seeker after a comprehensive knowledge of Harmony, Instrumentation, Opera, or Sonata Forms, would not be likely to waste time scrambling through encyclopaedias when there are so many *ad hoc* treatises on these respective subjects now to be obtained in small bulk, and at reasonable cost. As regards the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* articles, he would be wrong—but how is he to know that?—and therein lies the special justification for this new Tovey collection.

Strictly speaking, these are neither dictionary nor encyclopaedia articles at all. Mr. Foss, in his editorial preface, remarks that they formed the basis of Tovey's teaching at the University of Edinburgh. Well, the fact is that Professor Tovey never taught at the University of Edinburgh—he loathed teaching. Many a time I have heard him bewail the fact that he was expected to supervise and correct the work of students, a large proportion of whom were mere "Jacksons in F" (his own expression). From the very week of his arrival in Edinburgh he adopted and applied the system common in all the Scottish universities, and lectured, generally above the heads of practically all his students. They absorbed, rather than seized upon, his words, but occasionally there would kindle a spark of enlightenment that would penetrate to a brain suddenly receiving an impression that was never again to fade. But even so, he was always at his best on such occasions as, when offering explanatory comments on programmes of the University Historical Concerts and, as I have read and re-read this book from board to board, I have several times lived over again many a cold, but happy and profitable winter's evening spent in the Music Class Room of the university in which these concerts were held. The very phraseology employed in many of the articles is identical with that used in several of these old lectures which often acquired an additional sparkle of their own by means of fugitive quotations from Lewis Carroll or Edward Lear; Euripides or Shakespeare; Browning or Matthew Arnold.

Mr. Foss also speculates upon "what Tovey, an inveterate improver of his own works, might have done to these articles to-day, had he been alive to read them again in corrected proofs". I have complete confidence in giving the answer, "Nothing!" Tovey never enunciated a dictum that concerned fundamentals until he was absolutely sure that he was in the right, and it was only in the light of new discoveries that he ever effected an alteration of any consequence; any improvements would, without doubt, have amounted to little more than perhaps the addition of an extra musical illustration or so, or a suggestion as to what the Red Queen or Alice herself might have thought about it all.

There are altogether twenty-eight articles, ranging from one page to forty-two pages in length, the last being that devoted to "Music", and the volume contains all that Tovey wrote for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, except the one on "Modern Music"—one wonders why it was omitted—and the biographies. From a host of Toveyisms, I select the following from the article on "Rhythm", as especially typical:—

"When Rockstro tells us that 'the theme of Weber's *Rondo brillante* in E flat (op. 62) is in anapaestic tetrameter Brachycatalectic, very rigidly maintained', this tells us less about the music than Weber's brilliant theme tells us about these solemn terms. A more scientific idea of Weber's theme, and of the prosodic technicalities, may be obtained from the following paradigm, to be recited *prestissimo*. Each dash at the end of the line represents the quarter of a beat.

*Prestissimo*

Diddle		dum	diddledum	diddledum	diddledum	diddle		dum	diddledum	diddledum:	—
		1	&	2	&			1	&	2	&
Diddle		dum	diddledum	diddledum	diddledum	diddle		dum	diddledum	diddledum:	—
		1	&	2	&			1	&	2	&

After which Weber ceases to maintain his anapaestic-etcetera so rigidly, and proceeds for two lines with:

Diddle		diddle	diddle	diddle	diddle	diddle	dum	dum		dum	dum	dum	dum	do."
		1	&	2	&					1	&	2		

It was at such moments as this that the "Jacksons in F" were wont to detect stray glimmerings of light.

W. S.

## SIR DONALD AND SIR GEORGE


*Beethoven*. By Donald Francis Tovey. Edited by Hubert J. Foss. Pp. vii + 136. (O.U.P.) 1944. 7s. 6d.

First let us remember with gratitude the *Britannica* articles, the *Companion*, the *Associated Board* edition of the pianoforte sonatas, and certain analyses. The present ten chapters, with the start of an eleventh (on Beethoven's fugues), were, Mr. Foss tells us, dictated by the late Reid Professor in 1936, the subject having been proposed to him in 1912 and 1920, and doubtless the professorial Manes are gratified by the conscientious labours of the editor, assisted by Dr. Ernest Walker, himself the author of a book on Beethoven, and Mr. R. C. Trevelyan, on whose poem Tovey's opera was based. Twenty-eight years' continuous thought went to the making of these 136 pages, where—it may be stated at once—none but the slithiest of Toveyans (the noun is the editor's) will find very much that is at least not implicit in the dictator's pronouncements on music and Beethoven's style elsewhere. The *life* is not touched. Theorists may commend a table of key-relationships to exemplify the tone-poet's long-range power of handling tonality, and those who enjoy Tovey's humour, aware or not that it is of the Senior Common-room brand, and as much like genuine unbuttonedness as chalk is like cheese, will revel in the illustrations from *Alice*, *Winnie the Pooh* and Mr. A. P. Herbert. Nothing stamps your don as don so effectively as the airy assumption that he is only the man in the street; so that when one reads (p. 91) "we ordinary beings for whom the angelic Beethoven writes" one knows exactly where one is: the seminar rises before one, and voices, probably soprano, whisper breathlessly, "Isn't the Professor *marvellous* to-day?"

The dilemma expressed so well in Chapter I: "His music is, in fact, a supremely masterly and hopeful criticism of life. The difficulties and dangers of demonstrating this arise mainly from the fact that music can be described only in terms of music" is not always met squarely. The mind that denounces Berlioz' description of the first allegro in the Seventh Symphony as a "Ronde des Paysans" will speak of "the opening nursery rhyme, with its bass, or, to speak learnedly, its counterpoint, running like a kitten in pursuit of its tail" in op. 27, no. 1. Why carp at these mannerisms (you will say), or at things like the characterization of the finale of op. 10, no. 3, as "one of the funniest things Beethoven ever wrote" (*funny!* Look at bars 101-105), or the sneer at people who see connections between the last six bars (108-113, by the way, is a misprint for 98-103) of the slow movement of the D minor Sonata and the rest of that movement, when there is the chapter on development, including recapitulation and coda, the painstaking excursus on key-preparation, the passage on Palestrina's rhythm, the searching remarks on concerto and variation form (did he ever correlate the 32 in C minor with Handel's 64 in G?) and the erudition everywhere apparent? Well, well; Sir Donald is canonized now; time perhaps for an *advocatus Diaboli*.

Always Tovey liked what he was pleased to call "prig-sticking". As the greatest musicologist of his day and a composer, he need not have indulged the habit, but, to borrow Mr. E. M. Forster's apt phrase about "Mrs. Miniver", he too often leaves you with a suspicion that he is "top drawer but one", and that his vast knowledge is being used less in the service of truth than to prove another knowledgeable person an ass. Now, of all writers on Beethoven, for some reason or other, the one that offers fairest game to the British academic mind is that pioneer spirit, Sir George Grove. I have even heard an eminent professional musician assert that Grove could not read a score, simply because he said in his *Dictionary* article on Beethoven that one had no opportunity of judging the *Grosse Fuge* because it was never played. In this book, though there is one pat on the back for J. W. N. Sullivan, and more than one for Miss Marion Scott, there is ridicule of Grove for deriving the theme after the trumpet call in the third *Leonore* overture from the main theme, and his "delightful Irish simplicity" in calling the three notes that open no. 2 a false start, which from one point of view they are, instead of regarding them as anticipatory of the start of Florestan's *aria*, which, though Tovey finds it unnecessary to

say so, is a third below melodically. Now if you turn to p. 110 of *Beethoven and his nine Symphonies* you will find an anticipation of what Tovey says on pp. 15, 16 about the way the return is managed in the first movements of the *Waldstein* and the Fourth Symphony, except that Grove does not stress what to many must be plain, that the dominant is employed in the first and the tonic in the second. No mention of Grove either at p. 8 where conclusions are based on the statement that Beethoven wrote to Thomson that the key of A flat did not fit a certain tune that was sent to him, inasmuch as that tune was marked *amoroso*, whereas the key of A flat should be called *barbaresco*.

This is misleading, for Beethoven wrote "écrit en , and the key is as likely

as not to have been F minor, which (think of op. 57, the storm in the *Pastoral* and the start of Act II in *Fidelio*) is as *barbaresco* as A flat, in Beethoven, is "suave". Here, at any rate, Irish simplicity does not mislead, for Grove (*op. cit.*, p. 239) wrote "an air in four flats".

When I started reading this book I had no intention of drawing a comparison between two eminent men who between them have probably written more soundly than anyone else on the subject of Beethoven, and many of Tovey's analyses (particularly that of the *Choral*) live with me; but, as I got it into my system, my mind went back and I kept asking myself if much of what I read in Tovey had not been said as well or better by Grove. Other things apart, it is hard to conceive immortality for a posthumous work containing such a sentence as (p. 36) "The original rhythm being *Dum-dum-dum*, the variation is at first *Dum-dum-dum-dum-dum*, which, in the repetition of the second strain is, however, developed into *Diddle-diddle-diddle-diddle-dum*; after which, something really does happen". Books live by their style; "our delightful Grove" (p. 85), thank God, did not write like that. I will conclude this notice with two extracts, accounts of the same phenomenon in the final coda of the Eighth Symphony, by Sir Donald Tovey, in 1936, and Sir George Grove, in the year before the Diamond Jubilee.

SIR DONALD: After the Finale has gone through many adventures and the first theme has returned with the apparent purpose of making itself comfortable in a quiet coda, this strange note bursts in again as D flat, and insists on being taken seriously as a key-note under the title of D flat (♭VI). When doubt is cast upon this claim, the note becomes very angry and insists on being the dominant of an incredibly remote F sharp minor. From this a return to the tonic is attained only through strong representation, which, perhaps, by a stretch of courtesy, we may call diplomatic.

SIR GEORGE: First it comes as D flat and then twice as C sharp, each time roaring out its presence in a truly brutal fashion. Here the intruder is not, as before, a mere joker, but exercises its due effect on the fabric of the music. The orchestra has now no alternative but to go entirely into F sharp minor. From this extreme position, however, they are rescued by the trumpets and horns, who vociferate their F natural at the top of their voices until they have again collected the entire flock. . . . It is difficult to shut out the image of the composer, like Polyphemus, or Samson, or some other mighty humorist of antiquity, roaring with laughter at the rough fun which he is making, and the confusion and disturbance he is inflicting on everyone around him.

E. H. W. M.

*Essays in Musical Analysis. Chamber Music.* By Donald Francis Tovey. Edited by Hubert J. Foss. Pp. viii + 217. (O.U.P.) 1944. 12s. 6d.

The three volumes here reviewed represent the last of Tovey. Whatever the work about which he had to write, he always regarded himself as counsel for the defence; in this sphere he stands supreme as the only successful counsel who was consistently inaccurate in quotation (e.g. the musical examples in the previous volumes of the *Essays*), often vague in personal argument and liable at any time to digress, however aptly, from the point at issue. Tovey admitted that he relied on a well-stocked memory: that he refused to recognize a lesser erudition among his readers is not legitimate ground for criticism—what we did not know and he only imperfectly remembered, we can in any case

discover for ourselves. Here lies Tovey's special claim to our respect and gratitude. His writings are full of hints and suggestions for further reading which will enable us to adopt a truer perspective where his own views are suspect.

None of these three volumes are satisfactory examples of the "book-maker's" art. They are, very obviously, posthumous capitalisations of a great name and a well-deserved reputation; but although this one is a patchwork quilt made up from fragments of varying age, size and value, the best of the material is very fine indeed.

The chamber music analysed is a curious collection. A twenty-page general survey precedes essays on various works by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin and Brahms, including, rather oddly, a note on the Mozart E major *adagio* (K.261), usually regarded as an alternative slow movement for the A major violin Concerto (K.219)! More than half the volume deals with works for solo piano, including very valuable commentaries on the *Diabelli* variations and the Brahms-Handel and Brahms-Paganini sets.

Tovey was at his best when writing about variations. Although he liked to claim that "form" apart from music does not exist, he had something of the pedant's respect for those blue-prints, pattern-boxes and kindred impedimenta which are necessary concomitants of engineering, but, in the musical world, too often confuse the syntax of the art with the art itself. The essay on the *Goldberg* variations (here reproduced) is a fine example of detailed technical analysis which still retains profound artistic significance. In the author's very unequal output it is one of the many high-lights which more than offset those less happy occasions when

. . . . the slithy tove(s)

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe.

G. N. S.

*Of Men and Music.* Collected Essays and Articles. By Mosco Carner. Pp. 182. (Joseph Williams.) 1944. 8s. 6d.

The garnering of periodical essays into one book or more presents an eternal but not a new problem to the editor, writer and publisher. There is brilliant precedent—Leigh Hunt and Hazlitt and Lamb, Thackeray's *Punch* articles, Macaulay and Matthew Arnold and Henry Hadow. G. K. Chesterton's *Tremendous Trifles* is one of his most typical books, and M. Hilaire Belloc adopted the same dominant modesty of choice and title when he published his *On Nothing and Kindred Subjects*. Re-reading Chesterton's weekly outpourings, one gets a sense that one did not properly appreciate him each time he appeared in his papers. To read in 1944 Hadow's immediate notice of Brahms' death in 1897 (written in the train for the *Contemporary Review*) is to realize how good occasional pieces on music in English can be.

Dr. Mosco Carner, in an engaging preface to *Of Men and Music*, disclaims any intention of making his occasional essays into a book, and one look at the contents page is enough to show that (beyond the immediate grouping of his subjects) there has been no attempt at arrangement in chronological order of subject; nor does any other plan leap to the eye. He disarms without quite forestalling criticism. For a book is a book, and as an innocent reader, this writer must accept what he is given as a fact rather than as an intention. And that *Of Men and Music* is not a book, intellectually or physically, is too obvious to escape notice. These essays are not "jewels five words long that on the forefinger of time sparkle for ever". It is difficult to discover to whom they are addressed—not, clearly, to a consistently able audience, nor to journals that reach musicians of equal knowledge and intelligence. "There is not space here", I read on p. 105, "to complete this sketch of Mahler's personality." But there is space. Dr. Carner thought, when he wrote this, of his column in this or that paper. Had he omitted some of his later essays (or given them the chance to "grow into a more coherent discussion"), there was ample space in this slender volume.

There is an engaging simplicity about these essays; they smile. But the smile is sometimes a little patronizing, and, while kindly telling us that we do not really know, parades

an amount of book-learning. It is pleasing to read of Puccini's early operas and his *Capriccio Sinfonico* (where is it to be seen? The author does not tell us, save that it was not allowed to be published). There is a considerable outpouring of Central European culture, and references to books not commonly known in England are plentiful. Yet when one turns (as one does immediately) to the essays on Bruckner, one finds that a perusal of Dr. Alfred Einstein's article in the 1927 edition of *Grove* gives more information in a more compact and readable form; indeed, the idea that one cannot understand Bruckner unless one knows Upper Austria is expressed in the Einstein article in unmistakably similar words.

The point is important, for Dr. Carner writes much of nationalism—for instance, of Elgar's Englishness, without recourse to a folk-tradition. Bruckner's Upper Austrian isolation should not, surely, have been his barrier. It was (p. 131) "the popular national vein in Dvořák that drew the attention of the world" to Bohemian culture. Falla, the Five, even Bartók and Vaughan Williams, disprove this theory. And (finally, on this subject) was Bruckner's lateness in writing a symphony after 40 such "an extraordinary case of delayed maturity"? I was thinking of Brahms, Dvořák, Franck and Elgar as counter-examples. I want to know about Bruckner; Dr. Carner perhaps "has not space" to tell me.

The book contains seven essays on Puccini, three on Bruckner, four on Mahler, two each on Dvořák and Beethoven, one each on Elgar, Schubert, Schumann, Bartók, and Johann Strauss, and some more general articles.

A few detailed comments might be added. Of "Modern Music in the Balance" it might be possible to criticize the enlarged use of the word "modern" without sufficient definition, just as one might hesitate to adopt the enlarged meaning of "schizophrenic", a purely medical term, as the kind of jargon used by laymen to try to describe the Romantic artists—dare I call them the soul-searchers?—from Goethe to Ronald Firbank. Accepting the "modern" terminology, I find it hard to believe in 1900 or so as the date of its origin. And are politics really a legitimate inspiration for music? One writer doubts it, and Mr. Cecil Gray has forcibly shown in these very pages that art and politics have no real connection. It is interesting to find Dvořák so warmly related to Mozart. We know who was Smetana's God in music. But I, for one, shall have to wait a long time and learn more before I find any connection between Mozart and Dvořák—not even in the latter's church music, to which Dr. Carner devotes an inconclusive essay, where the church influence is stronger than the musical. Finally, are the Sibelius symphonies programmatic? It is not clear on p. 163 what Dr. Carner means. He quotes an interview of "some years ago" which the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post* arranged with Sibelius. Dr. Carner would appear to think that Sibelius said he himself was not like Beethoven in his symphonic ideals. I should like further evidence in support of this view.

We must quickly look at the presentation of the volume. Dr. Carner writes well for a welcome visitor, but he does not write English. Some idioms he has learned from journalism ("the composer of Salzburg" and such tropes often appear), he writes of "neo-classicistic", "motoric", "pentatonism", "symphonism"; he writes "many a year", a bygone idiom in English prose; and "may" for "might," and a lot of other oddments. I think of Parry and Dent, Hadow and Colles and Tovey, who have all proved that the English language and music can go hand in hand. It would be a bitter pill to have to swallow the idea that musicology is retiring to specialized jargon, and not staying in its established flowing English prose.

As for the publishers' share, it is obvious at once that whoever was responsible for the production of this book had never noticed before what he was reading. The material is quite unnecessarily poor—bad paper, miserable boards, cheap cloth, and a monstrous cover design, only suitable for a cheap music-title. There is no half-title (and no date), and no separate contents page, yet we can waste two pages on local advertisements at the end. The commas are erratic; there is no consistent "printer's style" of italics and roman; Morris and Morison, Jacobi and Gill and Walker, might never have lived. We are, in this format, wearing top hats and choker collars. When it comes to the music

examples, we seem to come up against cheapness as a principle, for they are not of the same width as the line, either too long or too short, and then they vary between bad engraving and worse writing, for some reason only to be explained as I have suggested. And I do not like "GOLGATHA" or "cessation" or sudden "quotes" in the headline on p. 120. The Editor commented in the last issue on the poor quality of English books on music as they are produced to-day. This book transcends his words: it is not a printed book of 1944, but a museum piece or a survival, fit to lie in a museum, next the mastodon or the Loch Ness monster, when they catch him.

H. J. F.

*Panorama de la Musica Popular Argentina.* By Carlos Vega. Pp. 367. (Editorial Losada, Buenos Aires.) \$10.

This book is a valuable contribution from the South American continent to the history of music. The promise of an extensive survey which the choice of its title suggests is generously fulfilled and the author has grouped, schematized and interpreted a great mass of material with such sureness and good sense that we scarcely need his own assurance that the work is the result of many years' investigation in the field and subsequent study in the Argentine Museum of Natural Sciences, of whose musicological section he is chief. It is far from being a tranquil excursion for the easy satisfaction of traditional theorizings; Dr. Vega disputes with unflagging pertinacity the uncritical acceptance of the legendary influences—African, Indian, religious and Spanish—upon Argentine music as we know it to-day, but he avoids the pit of over-ingenious argument which some writers have dugged for themselves in this vast field of conjecture. The particular aspect he has chosen for study in this volume is that of the various song-groups of Argentina (and of the adjacent states into which these have overflowed) which he divides into Primitive, Tritonic, Pentatonic, Occidental, Oriental, Colonial, Creole, La Plata, La Rioja, old European and the hybrid results of these—which he finds to be numerically few. He makes it abundantly clear that the processes of its popular music have received strong impulses from the four series of movements which have reached South America from Europe, and that these movements have vied with each other in the cities and towns and from thence have gradually dispersed into the countryside to continue a struggle for existence as bare survivals in anonymous folk-lore. The first wave arrived with the Spanish and Portuguese viceroys and brought the peninsular Pavana, Corrente, Canario, Chacona, Zarabanda and their like; the second influence was predominantly of the eighteenth century French dance-form, whilst the succeeding century enthroned the Polka and Mazurka so firmly that only our contemporary Fox-trot and Tango ousted them from their position of long-established and overwhelming popularity. Of the prestige which European approval confers we have two amusing and significant instances, that of the Habanera in the last century and of the Tango in this. Both were of American origin, but only gained an undisputed position as leaders of musical fashion at home after taking return tickets to Paris, returning thence with their baggage stamped prominently with the labels of official French acceptance. But to these exotic vogues South America added something of its own, something which gave an impression of strangeness to the early travellers from Europe. Evidently there were musical "reserves" in Peru—home of the Inca civilization—which opposed the foreign intrusion with some vigour. As late as 1713 a Frenchman observed that the dancing in Lima, the capital, was "almost entirely different from ours"; other writers added their testimony to this, emphasizing the vivacity and lightness of the native inventiveness. The fusion of races was already productive of definitely Creole characteristics. The development of these is discussed in an excellent chapter—El Cancionero Criollo Occidental.

The chapters on the Tritonic and Pentatonic song groups are of unusual interest. The author, commendably cautious of dogmatizing on questions of origin, considers that the Tritonic system—the three tones are those of our common chord—may be classified as "probably indigenous" and that it has remained underneath the Pentatonic stratum superimposed by the Inca civilization. But he suggests that this Pentatonic system

may have achieved a consolidated unity long before it reached Peru; it has certain rhythmic parallels in some tribes of North America.

In the chapter on Colonial song groups the struggle of one continent to resist the conquest by another is musically epitomized by what one may term the battle of the fourths, in which the augmented interval of South America sought to avoid the total extinction threatened by the triumph of our European perfect fourth. The conflict was a significant one because this augmentation was perhaps the most aggressive feature of the native scale. The struggle made itself manifest in various ways; by dissimulation, taking the fourth from above by way of mordents—the phrases in such cases hesitate and stammer before attacking the problem; playing both notes off at one another, either combatively at close range or at diplomatic distance with a mediatory phrase between them; or even omitting the fourth entirely. In this same section Dr. Vega describes the characteristic movement of parallel thirds. He admits this to have been a European introduction, but makes no mention, as in my opinion may well have been the case, that this very probably came directly from Portugal.

The author's manner of writing is at times excessively recapitulatory; but as he speaks of the necessity for unremitting opposition to the continued publication of books, monographs and articles expressing beliefs which are not in consonance with demonstrated facts, he may rightly be of opinion that such reiteration is justified. Each of the hundred and fifty melodies given illuminates the theme and through them the reader gradually becomes aware that, thanks to the care which has gone to their selection, he has gained a sense of intimacy with the internal forces which give life to the music of South America in general. The maps, however, have not been prepared with the same forethought. It should not be necessary to read with an atlas at one's elbow all the time; not even place-names mentioned frequently in the text are marked in any of the six outline maps included. Neither are all the eight illustrations worthy of their place in such a book. Most English readers will find that of the Gaucho Bonaerense of outstanding interest, for the plate bears the date of 1840, and that was the year before W. H. Hudson was born: they, like myself, will be glad to have this musical record of a unique people; the Gaucho's day may pass, but he will be remembered. Hudson's matchless prose descriptions of the scenes and sounds of his background, the wild life of the great pampas, the patriarchal communities grouped about the estancia, of the melodies he sang and of the guitar which passed from hand to hand in those evenings of a century ago when music was an equal host and bade every traveller rest and be welcome, ensure him such immortality as the English language may bestow.

A. L.

### *Reviews of Music*

Constant Lambert. *Aubade héroïque* for small orchestra. Full score. (O.U.P.) 7s. 6d.

"This short piece", a prefatory note tells us, "was inspired by a daybreak during the invasion of Holland, the calm of the surrounding park contrasting with the distant mutterings of war." Without that warning one might have wondered what the composer meant by the muted trumpet-calls that break into his sensitive and poetic line-drawing (usually on solo wood-winds). But this is not programme-music in the more precise sense; it is simply a lyric poem with an ironic under-current: the sort of thing that poets have done often enough since Heine, but which has few precedents in music. Although the orchestra is described as "small" it is roughly the same as the classical full orchestra of Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven, plus a harp, with *cor anglais* in place of the second oboe, and side-drum and cymbal replacing the timpani. But the *handling* of this force is almost in chamber-music style; the scoring, corresponding to the inner thought of the music, is impressionistic.

I wonder whether it was by accident or design that Mr. Lambert recalled, faintly but unmistakably, a motive from the introduction to Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, a beautiful piece of writing which is also, when one comes to think of it, an *aubade héroïque*.

Mátyás Seiber. *Phantasy* for violoncello and piano. (Schott.) 2s. 6d.

Not many people are writing in a full-blooded modern idiom nowadays. Or, if they are, they are not getting their work published. Mr. Seiber is an uncompromising progressivist and one gladly salutes his courage for that. One also salutes his accomplished craftsmanship as a composer, in particular his exploitation of the resources of the 'cello which would tell one, even if one did not already know, that he plays the instrument himself. But his technical ability is more remarkable than his creative impulse. To say that the *Phantasy* seems to have originated in an attempt to solve two creative problems simultaneously is not in the least to condemn it; an enormous amount of great music has arisen from the ashes of technical problems, problems consumed by the heat and flame generated by their own mental friction. But Mr. Seiber's initial problems—the exploitation of the melodic possibilities of the perfect fourth, and the working-out of a full-sounding texture from an essentially two-part basis (decorated with dabs and washes of colour, generally on the piano)—have failed to catch fire. He has rubbed his dry sticks together most ably, but they have remained dry sticks.

William Busch. *Rest*, 2s. *If thou wilt ease thine heart*, 2s. *Come, o come, my life's delight*, 2s. Two songs of William Blake (*The Echoing Green* and *The Shepherd*), 3s. All for voice and piano. (O.U.P.)

Mr. Busch has good taste in poetry (and in setting it), an adequate technique, and a pleasant—if not very distinguished or original—vein of diatonic lyricism. Consequently—though it does not follow as the night the day—he has written a handful of pleasant songs, of which the Blake settings are perhaps the best and the Beddoes and Campion pieces the weakest, while *Rest*, with words by "A. E.", stands the best chance of winning popularity. G. A.

*Homage to Paderewski*. Piano solos. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 10s.

The Paderewski Testimonial Fund for the relief of distressed Poles asked composers, native or resident in the U.S.A., to contribute original compositions for an album in homage to Ignace Jan Paderewski, on the 50th anniversary of his New York debut. Here we have the result of this request, an album containing compositions by musicians of a dozen or so nationalities.

The volume draws attention to the international assembly of noted composers at present in the U.S.A.—an eloquent testimonial to the havoc wrought by Fascism in the cultural life of all the occupied European countries. So the present publication is an historical document in more than one respect.

Nominally dedicated to Paderewski, the pianist and Prime Minister, the national artist of Poland, this collection is also obviously addressed to the tortured Polish people as a whole. Polish folk-lore and hidden allusions to recent Polish history form the subject-matter of most of the items. The reader is struck by the plaintive or pessimistic note that prevails throughout the collection. Little fighting spirit is displayed, little hope expressed in the music for a future Poland freed from its terrible ordeal. This does not mean, of course, that the music itself is lacking in interest. On the contrary, most of the items in this miniature international festival of contemporary music are remarkable in one way or another.

Bartók's arrangement of three Hungarian tunes (the connection with Paderewski is not clear) retains the rhythmic decision of the folk melodies; they are as rhythmically stimulating as any of the composer's. Counting myself among the great composer's admirers I feel justified in making one critical remark concerning the harmonization: this sometimes does seem unnecessarily odd—quite different from the strict harmonic logic of earlier folk-song arrangements of his. Arthur Benjamin contributes a graceful *Elegiac Mazurka*; Felix Labunski an infinitely nostalgic *Threnody* (unfortunately much of the value of the piece is spoilt by its somewhat amateurish treatment from the point of view of composition): it is related to Scriabine and full of the spirit of 1939. Eugene Goossens presents a short *Adagio*, a ruminant piece, working up to a terrific climax, a desperate

outcry—only to fall back into the initial mood of utter desolation. Milhaud sends a *Choral* in 5/4 rhythm with a curious dancing quality, recalling Ravel's *Pavane*. Among the other contributors (they are Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Rathaus, Chanler, Hammond, Martinu, Nin-Culmell, Rieti, Schelling, Stojowski, Weinberger and Whithorne) Jaromir Weinberger's brilliant *Etude* and a piece by Ernest Schelling, Paderewski's pupil and life-long friend, must be mentioned specially among all the sad "Homages", Mazurkas and other Polish dances. A piece by Benjamin Britten is published separately.

Aaron Copland. *Lincoln Portrait* for speaker and orchestra. Full score. (Boosey & Hawkes.) \$5.00.

A short narration, composed of a number of sentences from Abraham Lincoln's speeches, forms the text of Aaron Copland's new work. Simple descriptive statements, alluding to the great President's life and character, precede each of the sentences. The subject matter of the speeches as selected here is democracy; they culminate in the famous words: "Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

The words are to be spoken, as the composer himself puts it, "simply and directly, without a trace of exaggerated sentiment", but "with complete sincerity of manner". They refer to historical occasions, yet their topical meaning to Americans to-day is obvious.

A fairly large orchestra is required for the performance. About two-thirds of the work are devoted to a symphonic exposition of the material and to its development; the speaker does not appear until the last third. The function of the orchestra is not so much to illustrate, descriptively or programmatically, individual points in the speeches, as to characterize the hero's mentality, by way of the general behaviour and style of the music. When the speaker appears in the work the listener finds the "atmosphere" of the speeches already prepared by the long orchestral introduction.

The diction of the music is simple; its character is clear and strong, yet not without an occasional touch of tenderness. The themes are clean and very characteristically shaped; in the essentially contrapuntal developments this quality of the thematic material is exploited to the full. The harmonic idiom is diatonic and "semi-tonal", as in many recent American compositions. There is great freshness, much optimism and a fighting spirit in this music; it will appeal to large popular audiences, especially as it contains several elements of American folk-music, melodic as well as rhythmic. Romantic emotionalism will be looked for in vain, but great and passionate climaxes are achieved by the composer's technique of cumulative counterpoint and by the intense rhythmical life throughout the work. The orchestration recalls Mahler in several respects, but again that composer's dreaminess and mysticism will not be found in the *Lincoln Portrait*.

Copland's "speaker" is not a newcomer in contemporary music. It is true the function of the speaker, as contained in this piece, has nothing in common with that of the narrator in 18th century melodramas, but recently music with a philosophical or political message has repeatedly relied on the spoken announcement rather than on singing—the singing melody too easily distracts from the content the meaning of the words. The speaker (or sometimes speaking chorus) is found in popular practice just as much as in composed music; Earl Robinson's popular *Ballad of Americans*, Alan Bush's *Britain's Part*, and, in a sense, Britten's *Ballad of Heroes* are recent successful examples. The limitations of this technique, however, are obvious; it will come off only in such comparatively short works as those just mentioned. The duration of Copland's "Portrait" is only fourteen minutes, of which ten are purely instrumental.

How American music has grown during the past ten years! What a factor it has become in the international musical scene! Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* is only one of many original and interesting new works coming from across the Atlantic. Yet this *Lincoln Portrait* is particularly impressive—conductors and orchestras, please note.

E. H. M.

## Correspondence

To the Editor, THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—The publication, in book form, of Sir Donald Tovey's *Musical Articles from the Encyclopaedia Britannica* makes possible the verification of references by some of us who have lost, under war conditions, the access we formerly enjoyed to the original. In the last paragraph of my review of Dr. Wood's *Physics of Music*, on page 144, Vol. V, number 2, of THE MUSIC REVIEW, there is a reference which can now be corrected. For "contradominant" and "contra-mediant" please read "anti-dominant" and "anti-mediant".

Yours faithfully,

LL. S. LLOYD.

Kensington,

9th January, 1945.

To the Editor, THE MUSIC REVIEW.

FIDELIO

SIR,—I am indeed honoured when Mr. Meyerstein compares the versification of my libretto translations with such masters as Dryden and Praed, and it may seem ungrateful that I should quarrel with him for his disapproval of one line in *Fidelio*. But I beg your permission to reply to him, for that line involves a fundamental problem of opera translation. "I have never forgiven Professor Dent for rendering Leonora's famous 'Tödt' erst sein Weib' as 'I am his wife' (introducing Mrs. Florestan, as it were)." That Mrs. is a little unkind; call her by her proper Spanish title and she loses no dignity. That, however, is of no importance. I suppose I ought to have written "Kill first his wife!"; you might think that it fitted the music as well as, or better than, "I am his wife!" But Mr. Meyerstein, I fancy, has seen *Fidelio* in German dozens of times and knows every note and word of it. I do not translate for him; I translate for the man who goes into Sadler's Wells never having seen *Fidelio* at all. The first duty of an opera translator is not to be literal but to tell the story as clearly as possible; his next is to fit the words to the shape of the musical phrase. After that he may consider the difficulties of the singer, and when the original words have any sort of literary style he must do his best to find the English style appropriate. In many cases literal translation is just what leads to absurdity; and the fetish of some connoisseurs (whose favourite composer is probably Donizetti) for reproducing exactly the vowel sounds of the original language would merely lead to bad English singing.

But why not "Kill first his wife!"? I find the phrase rather affected and unnatural. What Leonora means is "I am his wife and if you want to kill him you must kill me first". Remember, not a soul on the stage knows that Fidelio is Leonora, not even that she is a woman disguised as a man. Mr. Meyerstein, I suspect, sees Fidelio as Frau Riesenbauch, whom nobody could possibly mistake for anyone but herself. Fidelio has already made one attempt to prevent the murder; Pizarro is amazed and all the more furious at being frustrated by a mere jailer's apprentice. He thrusts her aside and makes another dash at Florestan; once more she covers him, and this time she explains who she is. This is the great shock to everybody, most of all to her husband, who has hitherto not recognized her voice, though she has recognized him. As this is her second attempt to defend Florestan there is no need whatever for her to say "Kill me first"; her action says that to the stupidest member of the audience. "First kill his wife" is a poetical affectation; it might conceivably mean "Don't kill *him* until you have killed his wife; she is much the more dangerous character". Secondly, if "First kill his wife" had been the original words, Beethoven ought to have set them in the rhythm of the Bridesmaids' Chorus in *Lohengrin*. "Wife" is sung to a high B flat and a long note; no singer will produce much more of a word than "ah", which in itself means nothing. But if the audience hears her sing clearly "I am his —", then "wife" is a pretty easy guess for the next word, whereas "First kill his" does not lead up to it so obviously. One of the frequent nuisances to an operatic translator is the poetic mannerism of a character talking of himself in the third person, or to himself in the second; e.g. "Oh Leonora, why were you such a fool?" instead of "why was I such a fool?" or "Leonora will never desert Florestan" instead of "I will never desert you". Such things are all very well on the printed page, but in the theatre they make for obscurity, especially when set to music. An operatic translator will often be well advised to eliminate them wherever he can. Leonora is introducing Mrs. Florestan. Note that Pizarro has just introduced himself. "Look at me; I am Pizarro", he says to Florestan. And so Leonora—"Look at me; I am Florestan's wife". And the explanation is all the more necessary, because she cannot follow Pizarro's example and throw off her disguising garments. I hope Mr. Meyerstein will relent.

Yours faithfully,

EDWARD J. DENT





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